

# The Duchess Of Windsor The Secret Life CHARLES HIGHAM



She lived a life that captivated the world. She lived a love that forever changed a nation's destiny. She was Wallis Warfield Simpson, Duchess of Windsor, one of the most fascinating women of the century.

Millions have wondered how a plain, middle-class, divorced Baltimore woman was able to capture the golden-haired Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, who loved Wallis so much that he gave up his throne for her. Few have known the truth about the personal life of the Duchess of Windsor—until now.

Best-selling biographer Charles Higham's prodigious research has enabled him to write an electrifying saga of a woman's intrigues, schemes and ambitions, played out in a glittering world of luxury. His revelations include the secret of Wallis' birth that precluded her becoming queen; her harrowing years with her first husband, an alcoholic and bisexual aviator; her extraordinary experiences in the

*(continued on back flap)*

*Large Print  
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THE  
**DUCHESS**  
OF  
**WINDSOR**

## ALSO BY CHARLES HIGHAM

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THE  
DUCHESS  
OF  
WINDSOR

*The Secret Life*

CHARLES HIGHAM



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## VOLUME 1

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*For Richard Palafox*



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# AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have been fascinated by the Windsors from the age of 5 when, as the precocious child of Sir Charles Higham, the advertising tycoon and a member of Parliament (who would die when I was 7 and who had married, like Henry VIII, six times), I was brought from the nursery by my German nanny to the enormous, ugly drawing room of The Mount, our family home, to attend what I was informed was to be a momentous occasion. The men were in black tie, wreathed in clouds of smoke from expensive cigars; the women were in backless evening gowns, their shoulders vanishing in explosions of ruffles.

The combination of perfume and tobacco smoke made me feel ill; the decor of red, plush furniture and Chinese carpets swarming with dragons and exotic birds made me feel even worse. I sat on the edge of a Victorian chair,

having been told that I must fix my attention on a speckled walnut cabinet that stood under a gothic landscape painting. The cabinet was the family shrine: a radiogramophone.

Father turned on the switch, and everyone at last stopped talking. We heard a voice announce the advent of the king. I understood nothing of what he said, in an American cockney voice adopted partly from his ladylove and partly from a succession of nannies. (Some fifty years later, I discovered that the only language he spoke with a perfect modulation was German.)

When the speech was over, the abdication speech which would become one of the half-dozen most famous broadcasts in history, there was a murmur of conversation. I am told that my godfather, the best-selling novelist Gilbert Frankau, broke into tears, that the staff was sobbing in the background, and that more than one visiting European aristocrat had mist on his monocle. I had no idea what "abdication" meant. I was probably thinking about my pet goldfish, whether my father would continue to keep me a kidnap victim (I had been snatched from Mother in a Silver Ghost Rolls Royce, hidden and almost smothered under a heavy sable rug), or whether I would be able to finish,

under the bedcovers, unraveling a stubborn tennis ball with a penknife.

For years I have thought of writing about the Windsors. Every book is a new adventure; my three visits to England in ten months to research the book were as much an exile's journey of rediscovery as they were voyages of investigation. The England I had fled long ago had disappeared, to be replaced by a kinder, warmer, and more appealing country. Along with its empire, Britain had lost its stiffness and its stern, heartless formality. I was rewarded by examples of kindness that made me feel as much at home as though I had never left. I enjoyed lunch with the Duchess of Marlborough and dinner with the legendary Margaret, Duchess of Argyll, as well as country visits to Sir Dudley Forwood, former equerry and secretary to King Edward VIII, and his fascinating wife, and to Adrian Liddell Hart, son of the London *Times* military correspondent Basil Liddell Hart. I had pleasant days at the home of Hugo Vickers, who showed me evidence of the Windsors' charm in a recording made of them in London, read this book for accuracy, and gave me valuable advice. In France I had a memorable afternoon with Pierre Laval's son-in-law, Comte René de Chambrun, at his of-

fices, the Cabinet Chambrun, at 25, Avenue des Champs Elysées, and I stayed at the Windsors' favorite French hotel, the Meurice, where the staff showed me their suite. I also lunched with Lady Mosley at the Temple de la Gloire.

In the United States, I shall not forget visiting Alfred de Marigny (falsely accused and acquitted of the murder of Sir Harry Oakes) and his enchanting wife Mary at their home in secret-filled, luxurious River Oaks, Houston, Texas. Among others who helped in America, I must single out James P. ("Jay") Maloney, who in Washington D.C., spent countless hours exploring obscure documents, struggling against the restrictions of the Freedom of Information Act, and poring over shipping lists of the Dollar Lines, the Royal Canadian Pacific Lines, the Cunard Lines, naval intelligence files, passport files, immigration records from Seattle and New York, and thousands more abstruse documentary sources that no other biographer or historian had examined. Simultaneously, I spent sometimes frustrating but more often exciting months at the University of California Research Library and the Von Kleinsmid Library of the University of Southern California, as well as the Glendale and Pasadena Public Libraries, reading through scores of old maga-

zines and examining such abstruse items as the 1924 guest lists of the Astor House Hotel, Shanghai, issues of the *South China Morning Post* and *Hong Kong Telegraph*, and reports on the Prince of Wales's Ball at San Diego's Hotel del Coronado sixty-five years ago.

In San Diego I had a series of enjoyable meetings with Mrs. Dale St. Dennis, charming granddaughter of Wallis Simpson's cousin and friend Corinne Montague Mustin Murray, who gave me first access to letters in which the duchess gave a vivid account of her life. Her father, Vice Admiral Lloyd Mustin, had found them. The Maryland Historical Society and Radcliffe College came up with more letters, the latter supplying the correspondence of Mary Kirk Raffray, Wallis's school friend, who later married Wallis's second husband, Ernest Simpson. Sir John Colville, former secretary to Sir Winston Churchill, and now sadly deceased, was a mine of information. So too was John Costello; Nigel West proved to be informative on the intelligence background. Charles Bedaux, Jr., loyally did his best to soften my judgments upon his late father, who had committed suicide in 1944 following charges of treason and who had been the duke and duchess's host at the Château de Candé when

they were married in 1937. Robert Barnes of Baltimore was very good on the genealogical background. John Ball helped me with the Sir Harry Oakes murder case, and I was further assisted by Dr. Joseph Choi, a forensic expert, and by Sergeant Louis Danoff. Richard A. Best did some early research.

A special acknowledgment must go to Dr. Gerald Turbow. Herbert Bigelow, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Boris Celovsky, the late Richard Coe, Jim Christy, Mrs. Evelyn Cherfak, the Earl of Crawford, Mitch Douglas, Alain Deniel, Kenneth de Courcy, Todd Andrew Dorsett, Tony Duquette (and Hutton Wilkinson), Lady Donaldson, Leslie Field, Henry Gris, Count Dino Grandi, Barbara Goldsmith, Martin Gilbert, Betty Hanley, Lord Hardinge, Kirk Hollingsworth, John Hope, Lord Ironside, Anna Irwin, Michael Kriz, Samuel Marx, Mrs. Milton E. Miles, Philippe Mora, Roy Moseley, Lady Mosley, Luke Nemeth, the Duchess of Normandy, Donatella Ortona, Chapman Pincher, Peter Quennell, Daniel Re'em, Kenneth Rose, Jill Spalding, Rudolph Stiber, Roberta Stitch, Mrs. Beatrice Tremain, John Vincent, and Frederick Winterbotham all gave of their help. And the excellent physical training methods of Richard M. Finnegan, the fine

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## 1

## THE AUCTION

It has been called the auction of the century. Long before the sale, which took place on April 2, 1987, the jewels had flashed and glittered in glass-covered cases in Manhattan, Monaco, and Palm Beach; the columns had been filled with announcements and descriptions. A. Alfred Taubman, millionaire Michiganian and owner of Sotheby Parke-Bernet, was putting on the biggest jewelry show on earth. He chose an appropriately lustrous setting: the Hôtel Beau Rivage, overlooking Lake Geneva, which not only housed Sotheby's headquarters but offered, next door, the Hôtel Richemond, a handsome hostelry able to accommodate the influx of the rich who would

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bid for the romantic gems. Taubman erected a red-and-white-striped marquee in the lakeside gardens of the Beau Rivage: a grandiose circus tent for what was, in fact, a circus.

On previous evenings Taubman had thrown a series of parties to allow the potential buyers and their representatives to view the jewels at leisure. Shrewdly, he had selected the hour of 9 p.m. for the auction itself: an hour when darkness had fallen, and the soft lights, cunningly arranged inside the marquee, would flatter the women's faces. Only a few complained about the fact that they had had to eat dinner at an especially uncivilized early hour.

The men were in black tie, the women in designer gowns. Among those present was the Countess of Romamones, the "spy in red," an old friend of the Duchess of Windsor's who had been a U.S. secret agent in Portugal and Spain during World War II. Also in attendance was Grace, Lady Dudley, formerly a Radziwill and thus related to the Kennedys by marriage; another of the duchess's best friends, she had risen from Yugoslavian origins to become a prominent figure of international society. There were scions of the dispossessed royal families of Europe, whom the Duke of Windsor had befriended and whose treatment he

had deplored, among them the Princess of Naples and Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia. There were the Infanta of Spain, Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza de Kaszon, the Duchess of Badajoz, Princess Firyal of Jordan, and divorce superlawyer Marvin Mitchelson. Elizabeth Taylor was on the telephone line poolside from Beverly Hills. Many stars had people standing in for them, annoying the paparazzi who had made haste to the spot and, after an hour of photographing fading royalty or minor aristocracy, must have felt like rushing lemminglike into Lake Geneva.

The auction was late in starting; the rich had never been noted for their punctuality, and there was competition among several of those present as to who would enter the marquee last. Finally, as the clock moved toward 10:00, Nicholas Rayner of Sotheby's, ideally chosen for his elegant good looks, wearing a 1930s' style black tie, well-tailored tuxedo, and red pocket handkerchief, walked up to the podium with a gold gavel in his hand. He glanced up at an illuminated screen that showed, in flashing scarlet against black, the amount asked for for the first item, a sapphire, gold, and ruby clip shaped like a curtain tassel. A pretty girl appeared, carrying a black velvet mount upon

which rested the precious clip. It went for 70,000 Swiss francs, at least ten times its actual worth. It is safe to say that nobody present was interested in the real value of anything offered, nor did anyone think of the items as investments. The participants were there to satisfy a fantasy, to share a dream.

The atmosphere soon began to resemble a cross between Ascot, a Manila cockfight, and a Madison Square Garden heavyweight championship. Many auctions are notable for their silence, like that of a crypt or a gay bar. A scratch of the head, a subtle wave of a gold pencil, even the raise of a well-watched eyebrow would normally indicate bids that might run well over a million. But this time the people behaved as though they were at an auction in a bad movie. They shouted, they screamed, they fought, they gesticulated, they shook programs or fists or fingers at the podium with all the hysteria of the witnesses of a shipwreck or a major fire. The staff, chosen for their clean-cut preppie faces and slim figures, waved from the telephones to indicate that millionaires in other countries were demanding that they get in the last bids. After thirty-one lots had sold, \$3 million had been put down. A lorgnette framed in diamonds sold for \$117,000; it

wasn't worth a nickel over \$5,000. The modest cufflinks, coat buttons, and studs of the Duke of Windsor went for \$400,000, at least forty times their actual value. When everybody finally trailed out two-by-two at the witching hour, the auction had already fetched close to ten times what it should have. The next night, when Nicholas Rayner banged his gavel for the last time, the total sales were \$51 million.

Those who dipped into their purses and pockets wanted not only to possess the belongings of royalty—though ironically the Duchess of Windsor had never been allowed to use the title Her Royal Highness—but also to partake, albeit vicariously, of an age in which society was society, the rich were (in the collective fantasy, at least) almost uniformly glamorous, and, while the rest of the world was on the bread line, the party never seemed to end. They wanted mementoes of the love story of the century shining on their necks and wrists.

Thus, in death, Wallis Windsor was even more famous than she had been in life. She had been the most talked-about woman of her age, yet so much of her remained a puzzle.

As I began research, I was surprised to find that Wallis, in her memoirs, had covered her tracks with great expertise, even giving the

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name of the hotel she stayed in in Shanghai as the Palace and not the Astor House, and concealing the name of her traveling companion for reasons that will become clear to the reader. I was even more surprised to find that responsible biographers had fallen, one and all, into her trap; and that they had followed her blindly at every twist and turn of her ingeniously woven narrative.

As I continued the work, the character of this remarkable woman emerged more clearly, not least through the numerous U.S. State Department documents and passport files and Public Record Office documents, particularly those from the papers of the late Lord Avon (formerly Anthony Eden). None of these appeared to have been examined before. More and more clearly, I saw her determination, her steely will, her fight to overcome her own deficiencies; her love of intrigue, and her energetic dabbling in espionage; her pride in herself as an adventuress and a dominant woman who more than held her own in a world of men; her taste, her authentic glamour despite her lack of conventional beauty, and her love of the rich and splendid things of life. My greatest challenge was to determine the secret that made Wallis, a woman born illegitimate and handicapped by

lack of inherited money, by lack of strongly desirable physical attributes, achieve great wealth, incomparable fame, magnificent houses and the lifelong love of a king that brought her very close to the British throne. I hope that this book will supply the answer to the mystery.

# A BALTIMORE CHILDHOOD

The world into which Bessie Wallis Warfield was born, out of wedlock, on June 19, 1895,\* was without airplanes, television, radio, movies, automobiles, income tax, chain stores, supermarkets, cafeterias, ice cream sundaes, crossword puzzles, or bathing trunks. Almost everyone attended church on Sundays. Mail deliveries were made by horse and buggy, and blacksmiths still hammered out horseshoes; America had less than 75 million people, and much of the nation breathed the atmosphere of the frontier.

\* Not 1896, as given in all sources.

The United States was recovering painfully from a disastrous depression. The once buoyant and brash New World had long been stifled under a shroud of gloom. The chief causes of the panic of 1893, in which millions liquidated their stockholdings and banks collapsed by the dozen, were overexpansion, excessive confidence, and the unbridled investments of the robber barons. President Grover Cleveland was unable to find a salve, much less a solution; the Treasury had to fight to stop the constant drain on gold.

Yet the shabby-genteel backwater of Baltimore, in which Wallis's family lived, showed few obvious signs of distress. The Warfields were housed at 34 East Preston Street, a four-story, narrow row house fashioned of gray Maryland brick. The kitchen was in the basement; the parlor, hidden from prying eyes by handmade Irish-lace draw curtains and rich, dark-red satin drapes, was on the main floor; at the back there was a dining room flanked by African mahogany sideboards; the library was on the second floor; the family rooms were on the third floor and the servants' quarters on the fourth, or top, floor of the house.

The matriarch of the clan was Anna Emory, the widow Warfield. She was in her sixties, and

her hair was snow white, piled high and fixed at the back by a black lacquered Chinese ivory comb. Her pale skin was so tightly stretched with its netting of wrinkles over her high cheekbones that people fancied they could see the skull beneath it. Her hurt dark eyes, peering sharply or inquisitively out of deep, bony sockets, saw through all pretense.

Anna's frail but impeccably straight-backed figure was encased at all times in black: a mourning bonnet for going out in the afternoons, with a black muff worn over black satin gloves, and for house wear, always, a black knitted angora shawl, a black silk afternoon dress, black stockings, and black high-button shoes. She always carried a black kerchief tucked up her frilly black lace sleeve. After eleven years, she was still in mourning for her dead husband, the business leader Henry Mactier Warfield; each Sunday she prayed for his immortal soul at the somber Episcopalian church of St. Michael and All Angels and visited his tomb, upon which she placed white chrysanthemums, his favorite flower.

Her sole companion, other than her over-worked and harshly disciplined cook, maids, and butler, was her bachelor son Solomon Davies Warfield. Three other boys had moved

away: two of them, Emory and Henry, to get married, and one, Teackle, to set up in a small apartment.

Solomon had begun business life as a clerk; while toiling in depressing conditions at the offices of George P. Frick and D. J. Foley Brothers, he had managed to develop a number of inventions, and by the time he was 30 he had patented nineteen mechanical devices and organized the Warfield Manufacturing Company to market them. He was postmaster general of Baltimore at the early age of 34. Through his profitable, unadvertised connection to J. P. Morgan, who was financial adviser to the Prince of Wales, Solomon was president of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, which was beginning to push south into Florida against much resistance from local railway owners. He was president of the Continental Trust and a big figure of the Elks. He was a southerner to his booteels; he never forgot that at the outbreak of the Civil War his beloved father was in prison, by order of the federal authorities, in Fort McHenry, Maryland, and later in Fort Lafayette and Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, with a close friend, Severn Teackle Wallis, for nearly a year and a half. With nine other prominent members of the Maryland War Legislature of

1861, they had been confined for their efforts to have Maryland secede from the Union and join the southern Confederacy.

Solomon Warfield's households, which included his handsome farms Manor Glen, where he shot game, Mount Eyrie, and Mount Prospect, and his 109-acre Parker-Watters Place, with its aviary of 100 rare birds, still had slave quarters, where blacks were maintained in substandard conditions. Solomon Warfield was to all appearances a pillar of rectitude, with his close-cropped, carefully parted black hair, his square-cut, neatly mustachioed face, imposing physique, and erect bearing, his handmade suits and chamois gloves; he was cold, haughty, and disdainful in the Warfield tradition. Yet it was whispered that this smart Baltimore gentleman was a lecher in private, and there were few women, married or not, on whom his cool eye lit who escaped his villainous advances. His list of actress and opera singer mistresses in New York, where he retained a hideaway apartment on Fifth Avenue, was an open scandal. But no one could doubt Solomon's devotion to his mother. He wrote at the end of his life:

My mother represented to me all I really had. . . . It was always my desire to be financially

able to give [her] every financial comfort in life, which was the mainspring of my efforts. All of my life up to the time of her death my mother and myself lived together, and I look back to the days of my earliest recollection of anything, to the unselfish devotion of my mother to her children, her Christian fortitude and patience through most trying times . . . to be with my mother was to recognize a supreme influence: indescribable.

Anna Warfield's youngest son (she also had two married daughters living in Baltimore) was Teackle Wallis, who was named, of course, after Severn Teackle Wallis. Teackle was an anomaly in the clan. Not a black sheep—the Warfields could have stood that, and sent him off to Canada or California—but something unforgivably un-American: he was a physical weakling who had no athletic ability and even had to leave college because of his ill health. The normally robust strain of Warfield genetics had faltered when a failing Henry Mactier, at the age of 62, had fathered this ill-fated child.

At 18 Teackle suffered from consumption. Instead of sending the boy to an expensive sanatorium, his brother Sol insisted he learn the banking business from the ground up. He was

forced to toil as a clerk, with green eyeshade and leather sleeve protectors, at the Continental Trust, while his brothers were already insurance executives, working for Uncle Henry Mactier Warfield.

Tubercular patients were forbidden to cohabit with women. The benign family physician, Dr. Leonard E. Neale, must surely have issued advice in the matter of celibacy to the young man. But at 25 Teackle made the mistake of falling in love; sometime in the early 1890s, he met the pretty, golden-haired, lively, and adorable 24-year-old Alice Montague, whose ancestry, like the Warfields', went back to the Normans at the time of William the Conqueror. She always claimed that both families' knights were in the army that invaded England. She was the daughter of William and Mary Anne Montague, an insurance man and his wife, of 711 St. Paul Street.

When even a kiss from a tuberculosis sufferer was considered dangerous, possibly even a cause of death, Alice needed all her young courage to enter into a romantic liaison with her lover. He seems to have given no thought to the consequences to her, but in fact she did not contract the disease. Somehow, in cheap hotels or parks at night, they escaped the

watchful eyes of their families and consummated their relationship. Horror of horrors, Alice became pregnant. Dr. Neale reached that conclusion two months after the conception.

In an Episcopalian family, birth out of wedlock was a disaster. It meant potential disgrace, social ruin, and possible expulsion. The Warfields or the Montagues would risk exposure to such a scandal. The baby must not be born in Baltimore, nor would the official family history of the Warfields, then being written (and published finally in 1905), include the names of father, mother, or child. Nor would Dr. Neale preside over the birth or cousin Mactier, also a physician, be involved.

In the early months of 1895 the young couple left for Blue Ridge Summit, a popular resort of Monterey County high in the mountains that straddled the Pennsylvania-Maryland border. The excuse for this ignominious exile was that the resort was said to be good for consumptives. Warfield money ensured there would be no mention of Alice's pregnancy or the child's birth in the Blue Ridge or Baltimore papers. Alice would remain indoors for the entire length of the stay.

Blue Ridge Summit had grown considerably

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as a health resort and spa since the railroad went through in 1884. When the steam train chugged into the Summit depot that spring day in 1895, Teackle and Alice were met by a tallyho, drawn by four white horses, that conveyed them by standard arrangement to their new home, a cabin of the Monterey Inn known as Square Cottage, which was about as architecturally pleasing as a doghouse. The town offered Saturday night dances lit by Chinese lanterns, trail horseback rides, and Sunday parades with high hats and parasols, but the couple experienced none of these pleasures.

On June 19, 1895,\* Alice was seized by the first contractions. Dr. Lewis Miles Allen, a postgraduate student of Dr. Neale, arrived by train from Baltimore to ensure a safe delivery and no scandal. On seeing the baby, Dr. Allen said, "It's all right. Let her cry. It'll do her good." He did not say, and he spent much of his life saying he did not say, "She's fit for a king."

Not only was the birth the only Warfield or Montague advent that was never featured anywhere in print, but the baby, named Bessie

\* The date is documented in the census report on the Warfield household taken in 1900. No birth certificate exists.

Wallis\* Warfield, was the first Warfield not to be baptized. The family's Episcopalian advisers reached the decision not to permit baptism; birth out of wedlock was sufficient reason, Baltimorean church authorities confirm, for this grave verdict.

When Wallis came to be confirmed at Christ Church, Baltimore, on April 17, 1910, the baptismal record was falsified in order to secure her confirmation, and as a result of her unbaptized state, two of her three marriages, including her marriage in 1937 to the Duke of Windsor, were religiously invalid. In the eyes of the church she would suffer eternal damnation as an unbaptized person.

A marriage was finally arranged for Teackle and Alice seventeen months after Wallis's birth. It could not in any circumstances take place in a church. This in itself was a disgrace: no Warfield or Montague marrying for the first time had ever been denied a church wedding, nor could there be a dowry, or a trousseau, or even a municipal office wedding or a ceremony in either the Montague or Warfield family home.

The solution was to have the nuptials per-

\* Not Bessiewallis, as given in most sources.

formed in the rectory living room of the Episcopalian minister, the Reverend Ernest Smith, who suspended his finer feelings in order to perform his disagreeable task. The wedding took place on November 19, 1896. Alice wore a green, sable-trimmed silk afternoon dress, with hat and gloves to match, and she carried a small posy of violets; the groom wore a plain gray suit. No family members were present; there was no best man or matron of honor, and nobody to give the bride away. There was neither wedding party nor honeymoon.

The unhappy couple moved first to the husband's digs at 28 Hopkins Place and thence to the Brexton Residential Hotel, a faded family hostelry on Park Avenue with rooms rented out at \$1.50 a week. There, the enfeebled boy, often prostrated, debilitated, and flushed in the grip of fevers, no doubt brought anxious glances from the other boarders.

How Alice must have felt is beyond comprehension. Caring for a baby, with a husband whose days were numbered and whose coughing could ensure her own and her child's death, she faced every day with fear and anxiety that not even her stubbornly cheerful and optimistic nature could quell.

The Warfield ranks closed; the decision was made that parents and child should travel, presumably incognito, to 34 East Preston Street, which they did as soon as Alice was sufficiently recovered from postnatal complications to take the train.

Teackle lasted only six months; he died on November 15, 1897. Just before he passed away, he asked to see Wallis's baby picture—he was not permitted to touch her or kiss her. He was only twenty-six.

Anna Emory Warfield never went without her brooches and rings set with black enamel; corseted and starched, brooding over her substantial landholdings, she remained a despot. By the time Wallis was 5, the child was up with the family at dawn for prayers. Breakfast was announced at eight each morning by the banging of a brass Indian gong. Immediately afterward, Mrs. Warfield summoned her staff of six bonneted and aproned maids and instructed them in the business of the household. Mrs. Warfield carried with her a chatelaine of keys; when a maid wished to take linen from a closet or fetch the season's preserves, the servant had to apply formally for the use of the key. Each night at precisely the same hour Uncle Solomon would return and would inspect the rooms

for dust, disorder, or other evidence of the incompetence of the help. Sometimes Uncle Henry and his wife Aunt Rebecca would visit from next door to look at the child with her large, violet, eager eyes.

The Baltimore that Wallis saw from her perambulator on morning outings was predominantly Confederate many years after the Civil War. The quasi-British city was staid and mindful of tradition and propriety. While industry's chimneys darkened the sky, the better parts of town retained an atmosphere of leisure, ease, and comfort in contrast with brash New York or bragging, brawling Chicago. People still referred to their front doorsteps as "pleasure porches" and called the Chesapeake River beach a "pleasure shore." The city was distinguished by wide, tree-shaded streets of handsome red-brick buildings, dominated by the George Washington Monument in its small, elegant park and by the gilded domes of the Roman Catholic cathedral. Baltimore offered a profusion of evocative street names, from April Alley and Apricot Court through Crooked Lane, Comet Street, Featherbed Lane, and Lovely Lane to Johnny Cake Road, Plover Street, and Zoroaster Avenue. There were aspects of Baltimore that recalled the

London of forty years before: barber surgeons still existed, leeching their patients' blood to cure illnesses, and there were many who still performed surgery with saws.

Wallis was an outgoing, mischievous, and buoyant child. Alice adored her; she had her photographed week by week as she grew, so that by 1900 more than 300 pictures of the little girl filled her room. She called them the "Wallis Collection," after the name of the London gallery. Wallis was a Warfield: a born snob. According to Cleveland Amory, she named her first dolls after Mrs. Astor and Mrs. Vanderbilt, the reigning queens of New York City society. Her first reading was of magazines of fashion, the theater, and the fashionable world and of English kings and queens. She behaved royally from the first: instead of saying "Mama," she said "Me Me."

The atmosphere at 34 East Preston Street was tense and unpleasant for Alice Montague Warfield. Uncle Sol never ceased to make her aware that she was living on charity, but at the same time he was casting lecherous glances over her voluptuous young body. In 1901 Alice moved out, taking Wallis with her, and checked back into the Brexton Residential Hotel.

Uncle Sol's meager allowance did not meet the hotel bills, so Alice had to work. She could not type or bookkeep; her only skill was as a dressmaker. She joined the Women's Exchange, a charitable organization, altering children's clothes at a small weekly fee. At least she could make Wallis's dresses on the Exchange's sewing machine during her lunch hours.

In 1902 Alice's sister Bessie came to the rescue. Warm, sweet, plump Bessie had been widowed recently when her husband, auctioneer David B. Merryman, died suddenly from pneumonia at the age of 43 in 1901. Lonely in her big brick house at 9 West Chase Street, she adored Alice and Wallis and made a cozy home for them.

That same year Wallis became a pupil at Miss Ada O'Donnell's kindergarten at 2812 Elliott Street. It was there that the child's character began to emerge. She was determined to be first in everything. She was 7 years old when Miss O'Donnell asked the class, "Who tried to blow up the houses of Parliament in London?" A boy seated at a desk behind Wallis jumped up and yelled, "Guy Fawkes!"—just as she was about to give the same correct answer. Furious,

she smacked him hard over the head with her wooden pencil box.

Ninety-four-year-old Mrs. Edward D. Whitman, formerly Susan Waters White, daughter of a distillery owner, remembers Wallis well at Miss O'Donnell's:

She was as busy as a cartload of monkeys. Oh! She was bright, brighter than all of us. She made up her mind to go to the head of the class and she *did*. She was poor, mind you. The Warfields had nothing. Servants? Anyone could afford those. But she had no pocket money, not a penny. She loved the country. She would stay with us at our estates, Robinswood and Knowle, both are still standing, and she would have a great time with us—we were *eleven* children. She *loved* to play Jacks. At night, she'd get excited over the fireflies. She loved a story we would tell: how an English Lord came to stay and said, "Oh look at all the lights, where do they come from?" And grandfather would say, "Don't you have any more mint juleps!"

The biggest event of Wallis's childhood took place when she was just over 8 1/2. Early on Sunday morning, February 7, 1904, the household at Aunt Bessie's was wakened by the loud

clanging of warning bells. Fire wagons, drawn by galloping horses, raced along Chase Street to the downtown section of the city. Baltimore was on fire.

Fanned by savage winds, the flames swept through building after building, providing a terrifying spectacle as the residents of Chase Street ran to get their buckets and fill them with water. The sky was a blaze of crimson, and the smell of burning sickened the senses. When the fire was put out, most of the Warfield business establishment had been razed to the ground, including Uncle Sol's Calvert Building and the Continental Trust's headquarters.

In 1906 Alice was back at East Preston Street; she left Wallis in the care of Bessie as surrogate mother. In 1908 she moved, with Wallis, into the Preston Apartments, and began letting back rooms, an unthinkable disgrace in Baltimore society, especially since she let them to young and good-looking male students, including, for a time, her Montague cousins. She was lax in collecting rents, so much so that she had difficulty in paying her own; she too generously gave her tenants such expensive meals as Terrapin à la Maryland or Lobster Cardinal free of charge.

She taught Wallis to cook; the antic, prattling little girl was able to manage a Lady Baltimore cake or a pecan pie at the age of 10—and heaven help anyone who stood in her way or failed to smack lips over her efforts. One of the boarders, young Charles F. Bove, a medical student, recalled years later that Wallis was always busy in the kitchen, fussing over the stove and the dishes. She had her black hair drawn back in fancy braids. Because of that and her sharp, high-cheekboned features, he dubbed her "The Squaw" and "Minnehaha." She believed her mother's story that she was indirectly descended on the Warfield side from Pocahontas.

At 10 Wallis attended the fashionable Arundell School for Girls, just four houses away from her maternal grandparents, at 714 St. Paul Street. When pupils laughed at her because her mother took in boarders, she would hit them with her heavy walking shoes.

Miss Carroll was the head teacher at Arundell. Wallis often defied her authority; she was known as impertinent and haughty. She also used bad language, to the stupefaction of her teachers. She was spanked at school and at home, but remained proud, stubborn, and unregenerate. She was maddeningly hardworking at everything from basketball to needlework to

cooking to history lessons. Though she was not pretty, and was subject to theatrical headaches and fainting spells when attention strayed from her, she was popular because of her enthusiasm, vitality, and charm. With her angular, efficient body, her boyish shoulders, her "Indian" hair and face, and her jutting chin, she was, according to one fellow pupil, different from the other girls: "special." She was always immaculately groomed; she knew that a slackening of deportment would earn her a hairbrush smacking or a plunge in an icy bath. Her pencils were sharpened to fine points. She was never seen harboring gum or half-eaten apples. Her middy blouses and pleated skirts were always ironed immaculately.

Even daunting Uncle Sol could not rattle her. Knowing how she hated mathematics, he insisted she answer a mathematics quiz each Sunday night at East Preston Street. One Sunday she suddenly drew herself to her full height and said, "The square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides." Uncle Sol dropped the carving knife on the beef dish with a clatter.

## 3

# A STUBBORN YOUNG LADY

As she grew older, Wallis developed a new characteristic. She would plunge recklessly into some daring adventure, only to panic when she had gone in too deep. A fellow pupil at Arundell recalled:

One night she prodded us to spy on a Masonic ceremony. A police guard caught us and threatened us with arrest. Wallis panicked and we fled. She told us she was going to drown herself in a creek! We all teased her about that speech for years.

Another pupil said:

She seemed a fly-up-the-creek little girl. I mean she screamed a lot at parties . . . she had smartness and style without real beauty or hard, good common sense.

Wallis was fiercely angry when her mother, after eleven years of widowhood, took a lover in 1907. John Freeman Rasin was the ne'er-do-well, 37-year-old eldest son of the leader of the Baltimore Democratic party. He had not married before and was the worst possible prospect as a husband: a big, moon-faced, portly alcoholic who liked to lie in bed all day reading the comic sections and drinking beer. His excessive love of the bottle had given him kidney and liver ailments. But he had been kind and generous to Alice and Wallis, and he offered Alice, who still carried the stigma of her first marriage, a chance for a proper home and a father for her child.

During the courtship, which Wallis treated with sulks and fainting fits as she saw her exclusive domain invaded, Alice moved to a better address, 212 Biddle Street. There, in defiance of all conventions, she spent the nights with Rasin in the guest bedroom, just a thin wall away from her 11-year-old daughter. When Al-

ice announced that Rasin would be her husband, Wallis flew into a tantrum, screaming hysterically. It was quite obvious to her that the world had come to an end. She announced she would boycott the wedding—until Aunt Bessie Merryman talked her into going. Aunt Bessie could talk Wallis into anything.

The nuptials took place at 3 p.m. on June 20, 1908, at 212 Biddle; once more, there could be no question of a church wedding. On this occasion the Warfields and the Montagues did attend. But Wallis could not bring herself to see her mother married. When nobody noticed her display of sulks, she left the parlor during the ceremony and began tearing the wedding cake to pieces. She was determined to steal the traditional ring, thimble, and newly minted dime that were contained within it. She was surprised at her task just as she located these elusive treasures. The whole wedding party burst into laughter at the sight of her.

She had behaved better at the wedding of her favorite cousin, the gorgeous blue-eyed blonde Corinne De Forest Montague, in 1907—a glamorous affair because Corinne was marrying the ruggedly handsome 33-year-old Henry Croskey Mustin, a pioneer Navy flier. There was a full white-uniformed honor guard.

Wallis vowed that when she was wed she would have a similar husband, and an even grander wedding.

At 12 Wallis was a rebel and a tomboy. She was almost too bright to be bearable. With her sharp voice, constant question asking, air of confidence and boldness, and theatrical sickness attacks, she was considered a handful. She dutifully endured the religious practices of the Episcopalian Warfields and Montagues, who made sure she was confirmed even though she had, of course, never been baptized. She struggled through the endless round of prayers at morning, noon, and night and the irritating advice of ministers led by the Reverend Francis Xavier Brady, who had no more idea of the feverish romantic daydreams that went on in a young girl's head than would the man in the moon. At a time when young girls were supposed to think of nothing but sewing, cooking, preparing menus, dressing, and playing basketball, Wallis was already pursuing boys (who were used to doing the pursuing themselves) and planning a future as a doctor, scientist or explorer.

She liked many things passionately: riding the back roads on her donkey cart, dressing in

smart new shirtwaists, wearing lace-up boots. Above all, she loved the taste, the smell, the feel of wealth. She was addicted to her richer, prettier cousins: Lelia, whose home was the big Wakefield Manor in Virginia, with its Ionic, four-pillared portico, and Corinne, now settled in a nice house in Washington and soon to go to Florida. Wallis liked fine Irish linen, lace doilies, solid silver napkin rings, Waterford crystal, Crown Derby plates, orchids, tapes-tries, chandeliers, jewels—diamonds, emeralds, rubies—money.

In 1911 Wallis went to the exclusive and snobbish Burrland, at Middleburg, Virginia, a family country property turned into a summer camp. While there, enjoying the antebellum mansion and its 1000 acres of grounds, she fell in love for the first time. The object of her crush—or “pash” as it was then called—was the teenage Lloyd Tabb, a slim, dark, athletic, good-looking heir to a fortune. The other girls at Arundell and Burrland were jealous of her prize catch. They asked each other how she, the least pretty of them all, had managed to hook the handsomest boy they knew.

Her secret was that she researched her prey. She, who had no interest in football, found out

every school score Tabb had made. She knew in how many minutes he had swum to victory at meets, what kind of ice cream he liked, and that he enjoyed skating in winter. His friends secretly helped her in her conspiracy of seduction.

She knew how to praise, how to build the adolescent male's ego. Although it was thought immodest, she boldly felt biceps. She also knew how to charm the Tabb family by gurgling over their glorious pillared antebellum house, Glenora. She spent long, golden summer afternoons there, when she and Lloyd read Kipling's empire poems to each other, or shared the pages, one reading a few paragraphs, then passing the task to the other, of the popular *Monsieur Beaucaire*, Wallis's favorite book by Booth Tarkington, about a commoner at the royal court of Louis XV. Significantly, she liked stories about kings and queens and how the lowly could attract their attention; Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* was another favorite of hers, and she was aflutter over the daring Indian love lyrics of "Laurence Hope." Lloyd would never forget Wallis joining his family in close harmony sessions on the Glenora wooden veranda. Years later he said:

Curiously enough, Wallis rarely joined in the singing, though she manifestly enjoyed the efforts of the others. She was one of the best at thinking up new numbers for us to render. Having made a few suggestions, she would lean back on her slender arms, head crooked appreciatively, and by her earnest attention make us feel we were really rather a gifted group of singers.

Tabb gallantly didn't mention that Wallis was tone-deaf. Her skill was the ability to seem to enjoy musical accomplishment in others: she had the charm of considerateness.

Lloyd had a bright-red Lagonda sporting roadster Wallis loved to go out in. The first night he took her for a spin in it, she said, as he kissed her on her Biddle Street doorstep, "Ah, the leader of the younger set honors me with his presence!" and she threw back her head and laughed. Lloyd never forgot those words—or Wallis.

Later in 1911 Wallis went to Oldfields School. She had decided it was superior to its rival, Arundell, though to leave one for the other instead of going ahead to graduation was considered shocking. She even had the boldness to go to Burrland that summer from her

new school, brazenly confronting her fellow classmates and the basketball teams she had summarily abandoned. In her memoirs she wrote that she graduated from one school to go to the other, but the truth is that the two establishments took students from 7 to 18 years old.

Oldfields was the most expensive girls' school in Maryland. Uncle Sol had to dig deep into his pockets to send her there. But she figured he could afford it as president of the Seaboard Air Line Railway and (by now) six other railroads. The school was housed in an eighteenth-century white-clapboard farm building on 200 acres on the banks of the Gunpowder River. It had been founded in 1867 by the Reverend Duncan McCulloch and his wife Anna, whose family owned the farm. Anna, known as Miss Nan, was the principal when Wallis was enrolled.

Wallis's best friends at Oldfields and Burrland summer school were the heiress Renée du Pont of the du Pont Chemical family and the ravishingly pretty Mary Kirk of Kirk Silverware money. Together, the three girls, known as the "Three Musketeers," decided to make the best of the heavily religious, strict, drab atmosphere of the school under its noble, black-clad head

teacher and proprietress. Days were spent in learning whole chapters of the Bible, reciting prayers, studying sewing, or having cooking lessons. But there were lighter moments: visits by Renée's father, Senator du Pont, who distributed \$20 gold pieces to the girls; trips to Burrland by a jolting hay wagon that left everyone cheerfully bruised; playing in tableaux at the gym; putting on a vaudeville at Middleburg with Wallis's heiress friend Lucie Lee Kinsolving as a mustachioed Don Juan singing "Dear, Delightful Women" while Wallis and Mary fainted with delight; picnics at midnight when Wallis and Mary crept out of bed with Aunt Bessie's smuggled-in hamper of olives, beer(!), cakes, candy, and peanut butter and enjoyed the feast in a field; putting on blue stockings to go to a Sunday horse show; having tintype likenesses done; going to a costume party with Mary Kirk as the famous cartoon character Buster Brown and Wallis as Buster's beloved Mary Jane; going to Washington to see the great actor Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson in *Hamlet*, the girls shrieking with excitement on the railway platform as the teachers argued over the tickets, and then spending a glorious night at a hotel with Wallis and Mary yelling downstairs and waking up the whole school to

demand ginger ale and sandwiches well after midnight.

There were "rags" and dances and going-away showers and graduate parties, and, of course, dashing Lloyd Tabb in his red Lagonda and Wallis's second-best beau, rangy young Tom Shyrock, who went horseback riding with her. Tom said later:

Wallis took the highest jumps without batting an eyelash. There was something regal about the way she sat on a horse. I was rightly proud of my riding, but I had to take my hat off to Wallis.

Like millions of young girls, Wallis had a crush on the legendary Prince of Wales, the 17-year-old, golden-haired heir to the British throne. She had dozens of pictures of him in her room, cut out clippings of articles about him, and followed his movements incessantly. Lloyd and Tom took this schoolgirl silliness in their stride.

In 1912 Wallis began to tire of Oldfields. Mary Kirk wrote to her mother day after day describing Wallis's poor health, headaches, sore throats, attacks of nausea. The truth is, Wallis

was weary of so much discipline; she arrived late for the fall term in a complaining, bitter mood. She was quite displeased when the head teacher intercepted one of her love letters to Lloyd Tabb and other girls' Valentine notes and harangued the entire school for this wicked malfeasance. Miss Nan called Wallis to her study first; after all, she was the star of the school. The head teacher said to her: "You have dared write this wicked letter!" She flourished it in Wallis's face. "Do you have anything else to admit?" "Yes!" Wallis exclaimed triumphantly. "I have two jars of jam in my room. They're under my bed. Oh, and come to think of it, some Edam cheese!"

Wallis grew more and more rebellious. She starred on the basketball team against Arundell, then developed a nosebleed and announced she would play no more. She snored during a missionary's lecture on Japan and was pleased when she was told to leave the room. She disliked hiking and was delighted to come back covered in bramble scratches that kept her indoors. She ate excessive amounts of candy and then got dramatically sick.

During school vacations she lived with Aunt Bessie. Alice and John Rasin had moved to Atlantic City, to a cottage near the beach. Rasin

was by now a hopeless alcoholic. He died of kidney disease on April 4, 1913.

The following year Wallis left Oldfields, and Alice, still suffering from her bereavement, and much aged, took an apartment at 16 Earl Court, Baltimore, on Warfield-haunted Preston Street. At 18 Wallis now had to make her society debut, which would—custom required it—be followed as soon as possible by marriage to a rich and attractive young man from an old Baltimore family. First, she would, she insisted, go to the Princeton Ball with her cousin Lelia of Wakefield Manor as the date of Lelia's frail but good-looking brother Basil Gordon. Basil, who was dating another girl, said the idea was out of the question. Wallis ranted and raved until Basil arranged for his best friend to break a date and take Wallis to the prom. Wallis changed from tantrums to ecstasy. She and Alice fussed for hours over what she would wear. Wallis favored blue organdy; Alice preferred pink. Wallis won by discovering that she would be the only girl at the dance wearing blue.

Now came a greater challenge: the major event of the year for any young woman in Baltimore.

# RUNNING UP THE LADDER

The Bachelors Cotillon was the summit: admittance to the ball ensured a girl's place in society. Only 49 young women out of 500 could be admitted to this occasion, which traditionally took place at the Lyric Theater on the first Thursday in December. World events had seemed dreamlike and distant to Wallis: the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the 1907 financial panic, the advent of Halley's comet, the sailing of the Great White Fleet, the race to the north pole, the Baltimore Democratic Convention, even the sinking of the *Titanic* and the outbreak of world war in August 1914

seemed unreal. But the Cotillon—that was real. Wallis, unable to sleep, alternately hysterical with excitement and afraid and depressed, could only think one thought: Would she be among the forty-nine chosen?

At last the great morning arrived, and she tore open the envelope. It contained the precious invitation card! Now all she had to do, war or no war, was somehow obtain a wardrobe, a family member as escort, and a corsage.

She had to sweet-talk old Uncle Sol into backing her to the limit. She sallied forth in the family Pierce-Arrow to the crucial appointment at his offices at "Solomon's Temple," the rebuilt, postfire Continental Trust Building. She sat like a princess gazing out from the sumptuous auto as the chauffeur in gray livery drove her to her destination. Money! Was there anything like it?

Uncle Sol received her pompously and listened to her pleas. He knew as well as she did there was no way a Warfield girl would not make a splash at the Cotillon. He gave her the incredible sum of \$20—enough to buy at least thirty dresses! She made her way to Maggie O'Connor, Baltimore modiste, and invested her entire, newly acquired fortune in one dress and one alone.

It was an exact copy of a white satin Worth gown made in Paris for the famous society dancer Irene Castle. Wallis stood for hours while it was fitted to her angular form. She spent more hours learning the one-step and the newly sensational tango. She greatly improved her waltzes. Her mother waltzed with her at home; various beaux led by Lloyd Tabb whirled her across country club dance floors until she fancied she was as proficient as Irene Castle herself.

Of course, she must, she simply must have the best possible escort on the big night. It was traditional to have an uncle or an older cousin dance with the debutantes. But Wallis would have none of that. She would have her handsomest, most dashing, and youngest relative: her rugged, 27-year-old cousin, Henry Warfield, who was already half in love with her anyway. That settled, there were weeks of predebut teas and lunches and dances and meetings and hour-long phone calls with Alice going mad because she couldn't use the telephone.

Finally, December 7 came around. Wallis, after prolonged fussing and spinning around in front of mirrors, was at last satisfied that she looked like a dream. At the appointed hour Cousin Henry, looking like a million dollars in

white tie and tails, roared up to 212 Biddle in Uncle Sol's Pierce-Arrow.

There was an immense crowd at the Lyric Theater when they arrived. According to tradition, the splendid building had been converted for the occasion. The orchestra seats were covered by a dance floor. Red-carpeted steps led to the stage, which was festooned with orchids, tiger lilies, and vine leaves. Each debutante and her escort had an assigned box, whose floral decorations indicated the importance of the belle concerned. Wallis had arranged that her box would be far and away the most elaborate. It was a blaze of orchids, roses, lilies, gladioli, and her favorite white chrysanthemums.

The interior was draped in cloth of gold. The Warfield and Montague uncles were all there, imposing and plump and mustachioed. The young bucks were either in white tie or in Navy, Marine, or Army uniforms. The orchestra struck up "Back to Michigan," and Wallis sailed onto the dance floor with cousin Lelia's husband, Major General George Barnett of the Marines.

She was danced off her feet for hours. Each time a new partner joined her, she gave him her absolute and undivided attention, never talking about herself. As a result, the young

men came back to her again and again, though she was probably among the least pretty debs in the place, but she was bright and bewitching and she knew it.

At 11 p.m. the master of ceremonies blew a whistle and the band stopped playing. He announced that the "debutante figure" could now commence. Two by two, the 18-year-old girls and their escorts paraded around the floor, and the names were read out for the honor roll.

At midnight Wallis, Henry, and all the other young people drove off as loudly as they could, with shouts and screams of excitement, to the Baltimore Country Club, to one-step or tango until dawn.

In the wake of that glorious night, Wallis now considered herself a woman. Alice acted as her chaperone on date after date. Wallis was man-mad; she risked tongue-wagging by having a bewildering succession of romances. Asked to sum her up in one word, a contemporary says, "Fast." She especially liked uniformed men—and in 1915, with war in Europe, and after the *Lusitania* went down from a German torpedo, more and more boys in the social set were at Annapolis or West Point.

Despite her lack of looks she had more beaux than anyone in Baltimore. Soon she grew tired

of Henry Warfield and Lloyd Tabb and replaced them at the top of her dance program with Carter Osburn. He didn't have the height of Henry or Lloyd, but he did have nifty blond hair, a nice pair of shoulders, money, and a brand-new scarlet and gold Packard; she permitted Carter to be her date for the Easter Parade, 1915. After church services on Sunday, all the belles and bucks strolled down the street to show off and laugh and carry on to the tune of a cadet marching band. A belle could be judged successful by the number of small boutonnieres or fraternity pins attached to her bodice. Wallis had so many on her shirtwaist she could hardly find the buttons.

Cousin Lelia Barnett gave Wallis a coming-out ball at the Marine barracks in Washington, D.C. A Marine honor guard in ceremonial gold braid was lined up before the big dance in her honor, and she had the choice of whichever man she wanted to start the ball. She went down the line, chose the handsomest, line-backer Wayne Chase, and whisked him off as the Marine band struck up the first waltz.

Late in 1915 Grandma Anna Warfield fell ill with pneumonia. As she lay dying, she summoned Wallis to her and whispered in her ear,

“Your conscience is a mirror. Look in it every day.”

After Anna’s death and elaborate funeral, Wallis found that she had been left \$4000 in the will. She was beside herself, and in no mood to stay in mourning for months on end. Worse, Carter Osburn, whom she had almost made up her mind to marry, was posted to Mexico with General Pershing’s army to fight Pancho Villa. Wallis made a theatrical farewell with tears and fluttering handkerchief as his train pulled out of the depot.

She filled the months of family mourning for Anna by writing love letters to Osburn, which he read by the light of hurricane lamps in lonely Mexican encampments after days of scouting or skirmishes. But it irritated her that she couldn’t date or go to dances. Even learning contract bridge was no consolation.

At last, she found an opportunity to get out of town. On January 20, 1914, Corinne’s husband, Lieutenant Commander Henry C. Mustin, had sailed into Pensacola, Florida, as master of the battleship *USS Mississippi*. He had been appointed to help establish a naval aeronautic center for flight and ground training for defense operations as America lumbered toward war. Corinne had written Wallis often

about life at the newly formed base: the first in American history just a few years after the Wright brothers made their pioneer flight at Kitty Hawk. In November 1915 Corinne reported excitedly that Mustin had been the first man to be catapulted from a ship—in the AB-2 flying boat, off the rolling deck of the USS *North Carolina*.

Wallis, with her mania for servicemen and her addiction to the Army-Navy game, was excited by Corinne's news and still more so when Corinne asked her to come to Pensacola and stay with her. Wallis begged her depressing family to let her go. A family meeting was held, with Aunt Bessie and Alice pleading her cause to stern, black-clad Uncles Sol, Henry, Emory, and cousin Mactier. The women won. Pensacola it would be. And Uncle Sol owned part of the railroad that would take her southwest to the Florida Panhandle; that would ensure her a free first-class ticket.

It was a marvelous journey that April of 1916, from rolling hills and sandstone bluffs to the palms and lush green grass of the south. Wallis had a three-hour wait in Jacksonville and then changed to Uncle Sol's Seaboard Air Line and the L and N line for the rest of the

journey. Florida's blue skies and intense golden light delighted her.

Corinne met her at the Gregory Street depot and drove her to the white-painted wooden house, part of a long row of similar bungalows, overlooking the huge, landlocked, palm-fringed bay and the aeronautic station with its hangars, slipways, derricks, and machine shops. A white sun beat down on the sheets of rippling electric-blue water; fragile training planes, the pilot seated on the open fuselage without cockpit or headrest, buzzed overhead or out at sea, the wind whistling through the metal struts. Battleships, painted gray, lay at anchor, thin curls of smoke rising up from their funnels.

Wallis was in her element. Pensacola, the major Gulf town of the northeast Florida Panhandle, with 100 miles of unspoiled, snowy-white beaches to east and west, was predominantly Spanish in flavor. Settled in 1559, Pensacola had beautifully restored houses of the Colonial era surrounding Seville Square and Plaza Ferdinand VII. Corinne took Wallis by ferry across Pensacola Bay to Santa Rosa Island, a paradise for picnickers, and she drove her to Bayview Park, with its rich array of carnival amusements.

Wallis very much liked Henry Mustin. Older

than Corinne, he was 42, wrinkled and dark from years on an open fuselage in the tropical sun. His infectious grin and strong voice were pleasing, and he looked impressive in his flying helmet and goggles. He was having problems with the Navy Department that caused an angry exchange of letters between him and Washington. His chief quarrel was with Captain Mark L. Bristol, director of naval aeronautics. Mustin wanted more autonomy and better operational management from the capital. It was an uphill fight every day.

Wallis stayed with the Mustins and their three children, occupying a big, sunny guest room and helping Corinne with the cooking and housework. On Saturday nights she went with the Mustins to the San Carlos Hotel, where there were dances to a palm court orchestra in the big Spanish-style dining room. Once again she attracted many beaux through her expert one-stepping and tangoing, and focusing on their interests to the exclusion of her own.

Early in May, after weeks of sunbathing, swimming in clear, clean water, picnicking, moviegoing and dancing, Wallis was asked by Corinne to stay in for lunch to meet three young airmen. They were coming to the house

as a special favor. Wallis, on the porch, saw the officers in starched white uniforms stride up. She was excited; they were all good-looking, but one of the three was riveting and irresistible.

Mustin introduced him to Wallis as Earl Winfield Spencer. She wrote later, "He was laughing, but there was a suggestion of inner force and vitality that struck me instantly." At lunch, when most of the discussion about aeronautics matters went right over her head, Wallis couldn't take her eyes off him. As she looked at his shoulders and their gold braid, he made it clear, by the merest indication in his eyes, that he knew what she felt about him; she hung on every word he was saying, and he noted that, too. She wanted to know all about flying.

His close-cropped black hair stood *en brosse* above a high forehead; his piercing, bold, arrogant eyes, sharp nose, and firm, jutting jaw were very attractive; his expression was proud, challenging, and fierce. There was a slight suggestion of the simian in him. His body was tanned, lithe, and muscular, and his posture was erect and assured. His demeanor did not suggest gentleness, courtesy, or ingratiating charm. He appealed to Wallis; he went to her

head like champagne. She was always drawn to tigers.

After lunch Spencer sauntered up to her the instant they were alone and asked her to dinner the next night. He brushed aside her demurs and told her he would be calling on her; then he left. The casual, almost contemptuous arrogance of the young man left her breathless. She was in a daze; she felt no warning signals.

Spencer was born in a small town in Kansas on September 20, 1888. His father was a Chicago stockbroker, whose American antecedents, like Wallis's, went back to the early 1600s. Big, brawling Earl Senior was formerly on the Ithaca, New York, baseball team and had been a big-game hunter in his day, bagging buffalo, wolves, deer, and antelope, whose heads bristled from the walls of the family home at 109 Wade Street, Highland Park, Illinois.

Winfield was his eldest child. The others were Gladys, Ethel, Egbert, Dumaresq, and Frederick. Win was the bad seed in the family, though Wallis did not know it then. Enlisting in the naval academy at Annapolis in 1905, he earned a long list of demerits in his conduct record for, among other things, dirty shoes and uniform, room dirty and badly swept, bathing

trunks falling down at a swim meet, lateness at meals and drill and choir practice, skylarking in corridors, rowdyism, and moving furniture without authorization. Yet he was popular, especially in naval academy vaudeville shows, in which he excelled in drag. He was a good athlete at football, and he was cheerleader and head of the Christmas parade; "a merry devil, a singer nicknamed Caruse," said the naval academy magazine. He was a secret bisexual whose predilection, if discovered, would have resulted in expulsion.

His face stares out at us from the group photograph of the class of 1910: moody, dark, petulant among all the open, fresh faces, his jug ears standing out almost at right angles from the head and slightly undercutting the primitive, threatening, somewhat simian handsomeness of the whole.

His intimate friend was the dashing, good-looking Ensign Godfrey de C. Chevalier. Win and "Chevy," as he was known, were involved in a ghastly incident, hushed up to this day, on October 4, 1913. They were driving—Chevalier was at the wheel—in Baltimore while drunk; turning onto Madison Street from Asquith, with their headlights off and at maximum speed, they struck and killed two chil-

dren, Henry Siler and Benjamin Fooksman. Chevalier was arrested and released on bail; then the case was dropped—the Navy had closed ranks on the killings.

Spencer and Chevalier did not improve. They continued to drink heavily, and their behavior at the San Carlos Hotel was a disgrace to their uniform. Nevertheless, both made pioneer flights at Pensacola and Win was put in charge of training recruits in aerial gunnery, navigation, photography, signal and radio work, and test diving, in eighteen-hour shifts of great intensity and pressure.

Between 1910 and 1914, with various periods allotted for home leave, Win was on duty aboard the *USS Nebraska*, which played a leading role in the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, during the war against that nation. He had reported to Pensacola Naval Air Station for flight training on November 24, 1914. On September 27 of the following year he became Navy Air Pilot No. 18.

Wallis was to learn most of these facts later; at first she did not suspect the Hyde inside the charming Jekyll who set out resolutely to sweep her off her feet. Fond though she was of Corinne, with her innocent, china-doll eyes and flow of bright tittle-tattle, she was glad to es-

cape with Win, unchaperoned, whenever possible, for blameless romantic trysts at night. Henry Mustin was brooding and silent, obsessed with his battles with Washington, and there was a sense of strain in the household. Wallis always found it difficult to relate to children, and Corinne's offspring, including the spunky eldest boy Lloyd, who was at the toy train stage, baffled and irritated her, lovable though they were.

Through Win, Wallis met many of the men at the base, and she was captivated by their bravery; she flirted with many but it is unlikely she allowed intercourse. John Towers, base commandant; George D. Murray, who years later she would know again; Chevy Chevalier; Jim Rockwell; Dick Saufley—they and their girlfriends and Wallis and Win went picnicking and dancing together in a life of buoyancy and frivolity. It was good to be alive, young, and carefree.

But then, out of a clear, blue Pensacola sky, a horror came. On May 24, 1916, Wallis joined a crowd at the beach to see Lieutenant Jim Rockwell, one of the youngest of Win's set, take off in a practice flight. His training plane soared into the sun, to a height of 150 feet. Suddenly there was a choking sound. The

plane plunged in a nosedive into the sea. Wallis and the other spectators watched in agony as the body of the 26-year-old man was dragged from the waves.

Fifteen days later, 26-year-old Dick Saufley took off on a flight of several hours around the bay. Wallis and hundreds of Pensacolans went out by the boatload to Santa Rosa Island to watch him. After almost nine hours in the air, three struts loosened and the plane crashed, killing Saufley instantly. For almost thirty years after that, Wallis refused to fly.

That night Mustin was dark and thunderous, complaining of the lack of safety features in authorized plane designs, talking of inquests and official inquiries, holding emergency conferences, and making phone calls.

Wallis tried to find escape on Sundays. She and Win played golf, looked for beach shells, and went to see movies at the big, fancy, stucco Isis movie house—she loved Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd comedies, and cuddled with Win in the darkness and ate popcorn. She was still considered flighty. She dated other men, including Chevy Chevalier, with giddy, wild abandon. She was a “sport.”

She soon realized Win was in love with her; he exploded into jealous rages when she dated

Chevy. She was in love with Win. She told Corinne unabashedly she longed for him. Corinne knew the inevitable would happen.

Given the restrictions of the time, and the disaster of her mother's indiscretion with Teackle Warfield, there could be no question of her going "all the way" with Win, no matter how urgent his pleadings. Finally, he proposed, as she had hoped he would, on the country club porch late at night after the last picture show. She told him she must think about it and discuss it with her mother and Uncle Sol. He told her—he did not ask her—not to keep him waiting too long.

She went home in June. He saw her off with a lingering kiss that made her blush and flee into the train. Back at the Baltimore apartment, Alice was full of predictable warnings. But Wallis was set on her path and nothing would stand in her way. She had a persuasive argument: Win's family was rich and socially prominent; Win could ensure her a future.

No sooner was she able to persuade her mother than she picked up the paper to read appalling news. A violent hurricane had swept down from Alabama the day after the July 4 holiday and wrecked the naval base. Eighteen people were reported drowned. The Mustin

house was ruined by flooding. Corinne wrote her that the cow they kept tied up in the yard for fresh milk had been brought in and placed in the dining room. The water level continued to rise, and when it reached the udders, the cow stopped giving milk and never gave it again.

The damage to the base was severe. The tide had swept in and shattered hangars, planes, wharves, piers, and seawalls. But Win was safe—and soon after he came to Wallis on leave. The visit had to be very brief, because of the work that had to be done to repair the base. He charmed Uncle Sol, Uncle Henry, and Alice off their feet. And it helped that his father was in *Who's Who in Chicago* and was bedrock Episcopalian as well.

In August Win took Wallis by train to Illinois to meet his family: big, imposing, big-game-hunting Earl Senior, his mousey British wife Agnes, and their five other children. They approved of Wallis at once; the Warfields were not unknown in Chicago. Win bought Wallis a diamond engagement ring, and the announcement of their intentions appeared in the Baltimore papers on September 25, 1916. The wedding date was set for November 8. How would Wallis sleep until then?

# A STYLISH MARRIAGE

Wallis was determined that her marriage would be the most glamorous in Baltimore's recent history—a far cry from her mother's pathetic and shameful nuptials. Uncle Sol, who was richer than ever, having bought no less than nine more railroads, and was about to start the Florida and Northwestern that went 238 miles across the state to West Palm Beach, provided both dowry and trousseau. Corinne arrived from Pensacola, breathless as ever with excitement, to help Wallis pick out her clothes.

Wallis went to the expensive Lucile's of

Paris in downtown Baltimore and chose a gown of white velvet that would open at the waist to show a daring Brussels-lace filmy petticoat, worn by Anna Warfield at her wedding. Wallis would have a coronet of orange blossoms and a lace-fringed tulle veil, a bodice of embroidered seed pearls, and long, bell-shaped tulle sleeves. Win gave her a diamond pin for her corsage of orchids and lilies of the valley, and she would carry a bouquet of the same flowers.

Lelia Barnett and several Montagues and school friends gave parties for her. On the eve of the wedding Wallis and her entourage and family members saw the Dolly Sisters in the big, saucy hit *His Bridal Night* at the Lyric.

Wallis had decided the wedding should take place romantically after dark at the Christ Episcopal Church. The beautiful building was lit by beeswax candles according to Wallis's instructions; she would have nothing as parvenu as tallow. The lighted tapers and annunciation lilies, the bower of white chrysanthemums and roses created an appealing atmosphere as Wallis entered, to the organ strains, on the arm of Uncle Sol. She was followed by the matron of honor, Ellen Yuille, a friend from Oldfields, and by the bridesmaids, Mary Kirk, Lelia Bar-

nett, Renée du Pont, Ethel Spencer (Win's sister), and two others, all in pink and blue. Win was accompanied by a Navy honor guard, including Chevalier, in full dress uniform; his youngest brother, Dumaresq Spencer, the family favorite and its handsomest member, was best man.

The Reverend Edmund Niver made Wallis and Win man and wife. The couple ran down the steps to a shower of rice and then made their way by automobile to the Hotel Stafford for the reception. Wallis gave gold rings to each of the bridesmaids; they later used them as teething rings for their children. As the couple took off for their honeymoon, Wallis threw her bouquet at Mary Kirk and the guests showered the couple with white rose petals.

The newlyweds traveled via the Shoreham Hotel in Washington and the Shenandoah Valley Inn to the newly built and lavish Greenbriar Hotel at White Sulphur Springs in the mountains of West Virginia, where Wallis had spent many a childhood vacation and which she had visited just the year before.\* It was a

\* In her memoirs Wallis said she told Win Spencer she scarcely remembered the place. But her name in the 1915 register belies the statement.

spectacular train journey uphill to the expensive and exclusive hostelry.

They were shown into Room 528 on the top floor, which commanded an unobstructed view of oaks, maples, and fir-clad mountain slopes wreathed in mist. It was already time for dinner and they changed at once. She wrote later that Win, impatient on discovering that West Virginia was a dry state, dragged a bottle of gin from his suitcase. But he had been in West Virginia before.

His alcoholism was an established fact. There is no doubt he drank heavily on the honeymoon, both at the Greenbriar and in New York, where they saw Wallis's favorite Army-Navy game and the Ziegfeld Follies, and in Atlantic City, where the widowed Alice still had her little cottage. They took a train back to Pensacola in December, and once again Corinne met the express and drove them to the San Carlos Hotel. They stayed there a few days and then moved to the Widow Covington's house at Baylen and Gonzalez until the repairs of hurricane damage were partly finished at Number Six, "Admiralty Row"—a wooden bungalow just a few houses down from the Mustins' home, and of almost identical design, with a view of the ocean and a small veranda.

The house was bigger than it looked from the outside, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms and a decent kitchen at the back. It was still damaged: many of the clapboards had buckled and warped from the floodwater, and the carpets were in such bad shape they had to be replaced.

Everywhere, there was evidence of the hurricane. The road through the bayou on which Wallis had once driven with Corinne was destroyed and even the shortest drive, to shopping or the San Carlos Hotel, involved bumping through potholes. Win was involved in restructuring the still not fully repaired base, and this made him irritable and fretful.

Soon after her return, Wallis saw a grand spectacle: the arrival of the DN-1, the first dirigible balloon of the U.S. Navy, a huge silver form in the sky. To loud cheers from the crowd of spectators, the airship was moored to a barge and docked in an immense steel hangar 100 feet high.

The base had grown vigorously; there were 58 officers, 431 enlisted men, 33 seaplanes, and 3 dirigible balloons. Pensacola was readying for war.

Always correct, neat, disciplined, and proud, Wallis found that Win's behavior started to

grate on her. He stored water in gin bottles to upset Henry Mustin when Mustin, who kept a dry base, made the Saturday morning inspections. He caused excitement at the San Carlos Saturday night dances by performing impromptu in a straw boater, carrying a cane, as an amateur song-and-dance man, fronting the orchestra in an imitation of George M. Cohan. He liked to dress up on off-duty days in loud, checked knickerbockers, lurid sweaters, and brogues. He constantly swilled beer. He would use the excuse of toasting the flag before a flight; then he would have another drink to boost his courage, and a third afterward "to settle down." Martinis before lunch and dinner were concealed in open Campbell soup cans and served in cups and bowls.

Wallis hated the drinking and feared that Win would crash. When two ensigns collided in midair in a daredevil drunken stunt, she panicked. Every time Win went up on a practice flight, she felt worse. Corinne was her chief consolation, but on January 31, 1917, much to her despair, Henry was fired and transferred to Washington to be executive officer of the USS *North Dakota*, and Corinne went with him. Wallis found herself very much alone in the long, empty, sun-drenched, humid days.

She was consoled by the friendship of Gustav and Katherine Eitzen, a genial timber merchant and his wife, who had a big house on the bay, and by their daughter Carlin, and by another friend, later Mrs. Fidelia Rainey, who said:

Wallis loved the movies. Every single afternoon we would stop and buy bags of hot peanuts from the vendor and then go to the Isis Theatre to watch the picture—often the same one for a week. It kept her mind off Spencer flying.

One afternoon Wallis returned home to learn that Spencer had crashed his plane and had been fished, almost unharmed, out of the bay. She was learning the pain and stress of a difficult marriage. Wallis already hated flying and for the rest of her life she was to loathe the idea of war.

On April 6, 1917, America entered the world conflict. Win applied at once for active service in France. It was a shock to Wallis that he would want to leave her, but he had a fierce desire to get into the fight. His brother, beloved Dumaresq, was already in the Lafayette Escadrille, and Egbert and Frederick were on

their way to join the American Army Expeditionary Force for service in the trenches.

Win was refused permission to go overseas, probably because of his conduct record as an alcoholic. The Navy wanted its image in Europe untarnished. Win was furious and took his rages out on Wallis; he grumbled when, on May 8, he was directed to leave Pensacola and travel to Boston to train recruits at the newly formed naval militia station at Squantum. He was promoted to lieutenant junior grade, and his salary was increased.

After a brief visit to Oldfields School for the fiftieth anniversary celebrations on May 2 and 3, Wallis and Win took a flat at the Mulberry Apartments near the Boston Common. The Squantum experience was short-lived. Wallis filled the time going to museums and attending criminal trials. She drove Win to the base every morning and picked him up at night. Because of drunken driving incidents, he was forbidden a license.

By October someone in the Navy Department realized belatedly that the late fall and winter climate of Boston would make it unsafe to train fliers there, so the recruit operation was shifted overnight to Hampton Roads, Virginia. Wallis was pleased; she would be close again to

Lelia and Corinne and her mother. But instead the Navy ordered Win to San Diego in faraway California.

He was placed in charge of training cadets at North Island. The naval air station there had come about as a result of a joint Army and Navy board report; the training school was named Rockwell Field on July 20, 1917. This was in honor of Second Lieutenant Louis C. Rockwell of the Tenth Infantry, who had been killed in a training flight in Maryland in 1912. Because the Air Service was growing very rapidly, officers and enlisted men were transferred there at too great a speed, and the lack of discipline and organization was a serious problem. Two companies of the Twenty-first Infantry, followed by the Nineteenth Company of the Coast Artillery Corps, formed the backbone of Rockwell Field's personnel. Potash fields of kelp were commandeered, and hangars, construction works buildings, bungalows, and offices were tastefully erected. On August 20, 1917, the War Department took complete control. On September 8 the Navy moved in, occupying two old buildings and the Curtiss seaplane hangar. There were 413 officers, 144 cadet officer trainees, and 1576 civilian enlistees at North Island.

This new appointment of Win's was almost certainly a relief as well as an irritation to Wallis; Win would not be sent to a probable death on the war front. She began packing for the long journey west.

The trip, which started on November 3, 1917, involved a change of trains in Chicago—from the Baltimore and Ohio to the Santa Fe *Chief*—and a night stopover at the Blackstone Hotel. The train was luxurious, with big drawing-room sleepers, a parlor car with bamboo and leather chairs and sofas, a dining car which served fresh fish that was brought aboard during the journey, a library, showers, and an observation platform from which, if the children had not commandeered all five camp chairs, Wallis could watch the prairies and the deserts when the carriage windows were too blackened with soot. But the trip was not comfortable: on the way to Chicago, cinders and smoke blew in through the latticed screens, making the passengers filthy, and on the rest of the journey oil burners provided a greater menace. They blew thick, black, acrid smoke through the ventilation system, making everyone choke.

At long last, the Spencers arrived in Los Angeles and then took the train on November 8, 1917, to San Diego, a pleasant, sleepy town of

100,000 people with a paradisiacal winter climate on the edge of the blue-gray Pacific. The palm trees reminded Wallis of Florida, but the colors were more subdued and delicate. Wallis and Win moved into the rambling Hotel del Coronado, a hodgepodge of Victorian gingerbread with rich African mahogany fixtures and a driver-equipped Otis cage elevator of ancient vintage. The semicircular dining room was handsome, and the rooms, including the Spencers', looked over rolling lawns and dwarf palms to the sea.

While Win spent his days at offices downtown, Wallis looked for an apartment. Eventually, she found 104, the Palomar, 536 Maple Street, with a fine view of an imitation Spanish fountain patio\* and Balboa Park, which still had many signs of the big 1915 Exposition. Number 104 was one of only two apartments with a view and one of the very few with a separate bedroom.

Win was busy in those months, setting up the training school at the newly commissioned naval air station on North Island. He trained not only pilots but mechanics. He soon added

\* The apartment didn't have its own patio as described in her memoirs.

Marine and military personnel and raw recruits out of Los Angeles. For a while he cut out drinking, but news of the death of his brother Dumaresq in an aerial dogfight in France on January 16, 1918, drove him into depression and a guilty feeling of inadequacy that he had not served with his sibling. He began to drink again.

Win and Wallis moved often those months —an indication that they were restless and unhappy. They went back to the Hotel del Coronado, the second floor of which was commandeered as officer quarters by the Navy, and then to Pine Cottage, later renamed Redwood Cottage, at 1115 Flora Avenue. With its tiny, 12-foot-long living room, sun porch, and minuscule bedrooms and its quaint, gabled exterior, it was like a witch's house in a Grimms' fairy tale.

They went on to the slightly larger 1029 Encino Row and then to 1143 Alameda Street, their home for over three years. The cottage is virtually unaltered today. With a slanting, vaulted roof of heavy shingles, it stood on the corner of a quiet, sleepy intersection. The porch, darkened now with ivy and Virginia creepers, was in those days open to sunlight. The front door let the visitor into the side of

the 34-foot living room with its vaulted, 16-foot ceiling and its high dormer window. To the left as one entered were British-style windows with window seats. The floors were fine hardwood, and the ceiling pitch was pine beamed. The small dining area to the right led to a Spanish-tiled kitchen with fir-wood closets, and there was a small but sunny barbecue yard. The furniture was all pinewood early California or oak and chintz quasi-British.

Wallis celebrated her twenty-second birthday on June 19, 1917. She cannot have felt much happiness in the event. Win was subject to rages, sulks, and deep, brooding silences; were his bisexual impulses plaguing him? As for Wallis, she did not want to have children. Not only did all the Montague women she so envied, and whom she had emulated by "marrying Navy," have families, but so did several of Win's siblings. A man in the service wanted sons; Win's disappointment was gnawing and lasting. Wallis's flirtatiousness with any man in uniform vexed Win greatly; at a mere 28, he was already growing coarse and plump, his face that of a man 15 years older, his once-proud chin buried in fat. Drink cost him his looks and his figure. San Diego was a backwater; Wallis was tired of making her clothes on a Singer

sewing machine. She was lost; there seemed to be no escape. She fell out of love.

In June 1918 Wallis traveled to New York City to be a bridesmaid at the wedding of her school friend Mary Kirk to the French commercial and military delegate Captain Jacques Achille Raffray. The trip cheered her up; when she returned, she began to make friends in San Diego, including Katherine Bigelow, whose husband had been killed in action in France; Rhoda Fullam, daughter of a naval officer later a rear admiral; Mrs. Claus Spreckels, rich in land and sugar interests; young Marianna Sands; and Grace Flood Robert.

On November 11, 1918, the *San Diego Union* was delivered, along with the milk bottle, to the doorstep of Wallis's house. She picked it up and read the news that the war had ended in Europe. Hundreds of San Diegans ran from their homes in night attire, screaming and yelling. Wallis joined the crowd that rang bells, set off firecrackers, blew whistles, and danced as the sixty-piece U.S. Navy training camp band under Win's command led a sailor parade carrying scores of flags through the streets, followed by the sailors' band of the battleship *Oregon*. Win led the naval air servicemen, the California Women's

Army Corps, the Boy Scouts, the city employees, and the doughboys. By midnight the city had run out of confetti, and the still cheering crowds stripped the drugstores of talcum powder and shook it over one another.

After that great day, Win was more grim and depressed than ever. His drinking grounded him now; there was no war on, so his job at North Island seemed pointless; he was insulting to Wallis when they went out to parties and made snide remarks about her cooking when they were at home. A clumsy dancer, he was furious when men came over to their table at various Navy parties, whisking flirtatious Wallis across the floor to the new, popular numbers by Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. He charged Wallis with adultery; to be sure that she didn't visit or entertain other men, he often locked her in the house for the day.

On December 8, 1919, Mustin took command of the air detachment, Pacific Fleet. He had moved to Coronado ahead of Corinne, who followed in mid-January 1920. Wallis rejoiced in Corinne's presence in Coronado. Wallis also became a close friend of Lily, the attractive wife of John Henry Towers, known to everyone as Jack, one of the most dominating figures of the early years of naval aviation. He

was involved in the design of an early plane capable of flying the Atlantic; he was Navy Air Pilot No. 2, so entitled on New Year's day, 1914. (Win Spencer was Pilot No. 11.) In World War II, Towers would become deputy commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Lily, some seven years his junior, was a wealthy member of the Carstairs whiskey family, spoiled by the social life of London where they had met and married. Like Wallis, Lily loved to party and hated the naval life; she resented raising children when she would have preferred to spend all her time socializing. She was deeply miserable, and so was Towers, when Wallis got to know them. The Mustins, the Spencers, and the Towerses filled the long, blank evenings of naval-base life at the Hotel del Coronado playing bridge, bezique, and backgammon.

On April 7, 1920, a big event took place. The Prince of Wales was in San Diego with his cousin Louis Mountbatten on his way to Australia aboard the battle cruiser *Renown*. He arrived early in the morning and received the San Diego mayor, L. J. Wilde, and the governor of California, William E. Stephens, along with the press, on the boat deck. Addressed by Wilde as "Your Royal Highness," he told him

to "cut out that stuff," in an odd, half-American, half-Cockney accent he had developed because he hated the plummy diction of the British upper classes.

Wallis must have been deeply galled by the fact that she was not invited to the elaborate luncheon held on board the battleship *New Mexico* in honor of the prince, followed by receptions aboard the *Aroostook* and the HMS *Renown*. The guests were taken out to the vessels by minesweeper. The Towerses, Corinne and Henry Mustin, and their friends the Charlie Masons and the Pete Mitschers were included. Why were the Spencers not? It is inconceivable that Wallis would have missed out on such an opportunity. It is probable that Win's drinking and misbehavior and his clashes with the authorities had resulted in this example of cruel social punishment.

Slim, short, golden-haired, charming and informal, the young prince conquered San Diego at once. He came ashore with Mountbatten at 2:30 p.m., shook hands with the war veterans, and addressed some 25,000 people at the Stadium, while close to 70,000 thronged the sidewalks to watch him in the motorcade.

Wallis was in attendance with Win that night at the Hotel del Coronado for the may-

oral ball. But in another major blow to her pride, she was not included on the banquet guest list. She and the Mustins were among the thousand guests who thronged the ballroom, which was hung with native California wild-flowers and the British and American flags. The band of the USS *Mexico* played current hits; a local adagio dance team performed exhibition waltzes and "the Whirlwind One-Step," and the men in full-dress uniforms and girls in expensive gowns soon joined them on the floor, forming, according to the San Diego *Union*'s somewhat overwrought society correspondent, "a scene of kaleidoscopic gaiety."

Wallis only saw the prince far off, in Royal Navy tropical whites, shaking hundreds of hands. He left early, to go, according to some eyewitnesses, to Tijuana to sample the local pleasures. That was typical of him; he hated receptions and banquets and wanted only to enjoy life.

Although it must have been exciting for Wallis to catch a glimpse of her girlhood idol, the episode was swallowed up in the darkness of her marriage. In May Alice came out to visit Wallis. She found her in tears; Win was staying out all night and frequently broke up furniture when he came home. One afternoon Alice ar-

rived at their house to find Win shaking Wallis; they had been arguing because Wallis was not in a mood to join him at a game of golf. He announced he was going back to Florida, saying that he was in love with a girl there. Wallis begged him to stay; but by November he had obtained his transfer and left.

Wallis suffered through four months without a word from Win. Then, in the spring of 1921, he was appointed to the Navy Department in Washington under Rear Admiral William A. Moffett. Win asked her to come and join him; she agreed. Henry Mustin had finally made it into the department, and she wanted to see Corinne again. Alice was working now at the Chevy Chase Country Club as a social hostess and was dating a legal clerk, Charles Gordon Allen.

Wallis moved with Win into the Brighton Apartment Hotel on California Street in Washington. She soon regretted the decision. Win's screaming fits were unendurable and woke up the hotel at night; he locked her in the bathroom and left her there for hours; he fell down drunk; he had affairs with other women and, it is alleged, with men. Finally, it

was obvious to her that she had to obtain a divorce.

There had never been such a scandal in either the Montague or the Warfield families. Alice and Aunt Bessie were shocked. They tried to talk her out of her decision. The Episcopalian Church would countenance no such thing. But Wallis's mind was made up. Just because nobody divorced in her family was no reason for her to be bound to a man she hated for the rest of her life.

She went to see Uncle Sol, now the biggest railroad baron in the south, in his offices at the Continental Trust. He was furious, horrified; he screamed, "I will not let you bring this disgrace upon us!" Then he softened a little and asked her to try again.

She did, but it was hopeless. She would prepare a dinner as carefully and expertly as she could, and Win would not turn up for it.

On June 19, 1922, Win told Wallis he was moving out, to the Army and Navy Club. Wallis called Alice; her mother came to the hotel, and Wallis tearfully showed her the closets empty of Win's clothing. Alice stayed overnight. The next day Wallis called the club. The reply was, "Commander Spencer will not care to talk to you." Alice waited an hour; then she

called him herself. She urged him to come and have a family conference. Win said, "It's useless to talk about my returning. I have made up my mind to live my own life as I see fit."

Anguished, deeply disappointed, and depressed, Wallis moved in with her mother, at 2301 Connecticut Avenue. Win moved to Rauscher's Hotel. That fall Alice asked Win to come to her apartment for a chat. There, he told Alice flatly that he was in love with another woman. "I'm far happier away from Wallis," he said. Then he left, declining Alice's invitation to stay for dinner.

In November 1922 Chevy Chevalier died in a plane crash, and Win was devastated and inconsolable. He drank more heavily than ever. In February 1923 his extramarital affair collapsed. Win quarreled constantly with the Navy and, like Henry Mustin before him, was grounded: he was transferred to warship service, as master of the *Pampanga*, of the South China Patrol of the Asiatic Fleet.

The *Pampanga* was a 1400-ton, leaky, 36-year-old former Spanish gunboat of dubious seaworthiness that patrolled the war-torn Canton Delta. She was the only vessel small enough to slip through the narrow, marshy estuaries where fire and mass bloodshed oc-

curred. The vessel had great holes in the hull, caused by Chinese guns during frequent off-shore battles; there were no showers, just a bucket of water on a string, and no proper toilet, just a primitive head; there was no proper ventilation, so in the summer heat the men had to sleep half naked on mattresses on deck. The ship and its fellow vessels of the South China Patrol were delegated by the Navy secretly to ship Standard Oil petroleum into the mainland and publicly to protect American businesses and missions in a nation torn apart by rival generals and by Russian-inspired revolutionaries. Each captain also had an intelligence mission and a charter to rescue endangered missionaries or Standard Oil personnel. Every day priests and parsons were butchered by various conflicting and murderous groups, and war with America or Britain was threatened. Grounded from flying, in charge of the lousiest ship in the Navy, Win began drinking more heavily than ever.

Wallis made the best of the separation. The fact that her husband was on active service and that China was too dangerous a place for a young woman made her position more acceptable than that of a would-be divorcée; she met many old friends again and through two of

them from San Diego, Marianna Sands and Ethel Noyes, she entered diplomatic society. Although she would deny it at a crucial stage later on, she spoke fairly good German, having studied it at Oldfields; and she had a smattering of French.

At a reception at the Italian Embassy Wallis set her cap for, and won, the attractive Italian ambassador himself. The 45-year-old Prince Gelasio Caetani had at least two popes and two cardinals in his family. He was the son of Prince Teamo and the American Ada Bootle Wilbraham. He graduated in civil engineering from the University of Rome in 1901; he became a geologist and mining authority and in 1910 based an engineering firm, Burch, Caetani and Hearsley, in San Francisco.

In World War I he served in the Italian army and won several decorations. A convinced nationalist, he was a passionate supporter of fascism and participated in the march on Rome in 1922. He was appointed to Washington; Mussolini saw in him the ideal person who could succeed in winning the interest and sympathy of the American ruling classes: he had a vast network of connections in eastern cultural and money circles.

He worked hard on the extinction of the

Italian war debt and establishment of strong relations with the Italo-American military and navy. He built a new embassy with Mussolini money, an ornate imitation of a Renaissance palace.

There is no question that it was Caetani who first and most deeply involved Wallis in an interest in his Italian dictator master and in the Italian system of government; exercising such influence was his main purpose in becoming involved with her, apart from the strong sexual bond between them. He knew she moved through every level of Washington society; that she could purvey the Fascist doctrine, albeit in a somewhat superficial manner, wherever she went. Such is confirmed by a reliable source in Rome who was a close friend and associate of Caetani's.

The affair didn't last; Wallis soon settled for friendship.

She had a more serious relationship with Felipe Espil, the 35-year-old first secretary to the Argentine Embassy. Espil was rich, smooth, a classic Latin lover who danced the best tango in town. His black hair was plastered to his head with brilliantine. His eyes glowed like Rudolf Valentino's. He had an oval, pale-olive face with full, sensual lips, a short neck, and a slim

but muscular body. He wore a monocle. He was the biggest catch in Washington.

Wallis wasted no time. Husband or no husband, she had to have him. She got herself invited to a dinner party at which he would be present. Espil was everything she had been told he would be. But she was afraid that with the competition from so many gorgeous single young women, she wouldn't have a chance. With her square-cut face and flat, masculine figure, what hope did she have? But she was determined to try; nothing and no one, not even the most shapely Washington belle, would stand in her way. This ugly duckling set out to get Felipe Espil into bed with all the determination of Wellington planning the Battle of Waterloo.

She summoned up her courage and asked her hostess and Espil, but not his date, to an eggnog party at her mother's apartment. He came, alone as requested—Wallis left nothing to chance—and she set out to fascinate him with her wit and charm. He was captivated and, to gasps all around, asked her to lunch at the Hamilton Hotel. She accepted, only to find herself in the midst of the "Soixante Gourmets," a group whose functions she had already

gone to with other young diplomats, most of whom were there. But nobody minded; it was catch as catch can in the young Washington society of those days.

With her usual gift for flattery, for making a man feel he was a cross between Socrates and Apollo, she won Espil away from the society beauties who pursued him. And although he cried poor, Espil had in fact risen through powerful family connections in the government of President Hipolito Irigoyen, a radical labor suppressor and German sympathizer who had kept his country out of World War I despite large British interests in Buenos Aires and German attacks on Argentinean shipping. Irigoyen ruled over a country crippled by a corrupt administration and haunted by mass poverty. Espil was an appeasement diplomat who wanted to avoid all future wars. Wallis listened and learned.

Their affair became the scandal of Washington. Mrs. Lawrence Townsend, the queen of society, refused to invite Wallis to the annual Townsend Ball that was considered the social event of the year. When Wallis complained, Espil said to her, "I can't ask Mrs. Townsend to invite my mistress!" Wallis was furious. But

she managed to push her way into other events to which Espil was invited, and she even dared to go to the Argentinean Ball as his guest.

Then, Wallis met her nemesis.

## CHINA

Felipe Espil, who had not been faithful to Wallis, met and fell in love with the society beauty Courtney Letta Stilwell, of the famous political and military family. When she found out, Wallis was furious. In an excess of jealousy she attacked Espil, clawing his cheeks until they bled. He dropped her at once; she decided to give up Washington, where her defeat had made her a laughingstock.

There is a substantial documentary file on her at the time, preserved at the State Department, which shows that she moved in with Captain Luke McNamee, the chief of naval intelligence, and his wife, the painter Dorothy McNamee, at their Georgetown house, a typi-

cal preliminary move to test confidentiality and to be briefed in secrecy. Harry W. Smith, chief clerk at the naval intelligence headquarters, examined her carefully on July 9, 1923. That month she sailed to France and England aboard the *President Garfield*, accompanied by Corinne Mustin. In Paris she made contact with William E. Eberle and Gerald Green, both intelligence liaisons for the U.S. Navy at the embassy; she proceeded to London and Rome.

It was a custom of the time to use trusted Navy wives, briefed at headquarters, as unofficial couriers carrying classified documents to Europe and the Orient. Couriers were necessary because all telegraph messages transmitted to the U.S. Navy in China were intercepted and read, and the cyphers were broken; all radio messages were transmitted from a central tower in Manila and again could be read. Thus, the only way to transmit information was by trusted immediate family members of naval personnel. On her return from Europe, Wallis was seconded to link up with Win Spencer in China. Captain Henry R. Hough, who had taken over from Captain McNamee as chief when the latter was put in charge of intelligence at the Panama Canal, personally signed

the papers that authorized the trip. Meantime, Spencer was appointed a naval intelligence officer of the South China Fleet, combining his job of gunboat captain of the *Pampanga* with that more important office. His headquarters at Shameen Legation Island, Canton, were crucially situated since both Sun Yat-sen and the Communists were constantly attacking missionaries and annexing American properties in the region. Win was to join Wallis in Hong Kong on September 8; she would link up there with Mary Sadler, wife of the intelligence officer Rear Admiral Frank H. Sadler of the USS *Sacramento*. The two women would then proceed to Shanghai, where American interests were endangered by Russian-controlled warlords in the Civil War.

Wallis was given another intelligence clearance, and put aboard the troop carrier *Chaumont*, a former double-ended Hog Island ferry, carrying 1200 enlisted men to Pearl Harbor, Guam, and Cavite. Under the command of Captain F. L. Oliver, the vessel was moored at Pier 10, Brooklyn Navy Yard, on July 17, 1924, when Wallis, according to the log, came aboard at 4:30 p.m. She was berthed with Ruth Thompson, fiancée of Lieutenant R. E. Forsyth, who was going to join her husband-to-be

at Cavite, and two other women. A cousin of Win's from Chicago, Lieutenant Douglas E. Spencer, was aboard, seconded to Cavite with his wife and 5-year-old son. The ship was crammed with marines and doughboys.

The *Chaumont* steamed out of Brooklyn at midnight, stopping for a few hours at anchor off the shore because of boiler trouble; the vessel made landfall at Hampton Roads, Virginia, later that day. Two days later the vessel entered the Panama Canal in suffocating heat and berthed at Cristobal and Balboa; the crew, crammed into stifling quarters with as many as ten to a cabin, began to grow unruly and clashed in fistfights with the marines aboard. A gang of below-decks ensigns tossed a film intended for the officers' mess into the canal. A doughboy attacked and beat a quartermaster and was court-martialed and confined to the brig. The daylight canal transit was delayed; the British battleships *Hood*, *Repulse*, and *Adelaide* were steaming into the locks, and the *Chaumont* had to anchor in Gatun Lake. Wallis, hating the trip, exhausted, and feverish, had a miserable sojourn in Panama City. Two days out into the Pacific, on the twenty-eighth, a man was killed and flung into the sea. More court-martials followed as the drunken and dis-

orderly crew came to the edge of outright mutiny.

The voyage into Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was tricky, involving the navigation of a dangerous coral reef in a violent, gusty squall. Wallis stayed one week in Honolulu; the vessel sailed on August 13. At Guam Governor Henry B. Price received her and the other wives with the *Chaumont*'s officers at an official reception; three days later Price was piped aboard the vessel to make the rest of the journey to Cavite.

After weeks of stifling, monotonous voyaging, the *Chaumont* at last made landfall off San Miguel Light and Manila Bay on August 30, 1924. Wallis had to be billeted at naval headquarters because she was one of the few wives continuing to Hong Kong; there had been riots along the wharves following student demonstrations the week before. She was sent aboard the *Empress of Canada*, the famous "jinx ship" of the Canadian Pacific Line, on the fourth of September.

Wallis's arrival in Hong Kong on September 8 was one of the great experiences of her life. Black fishing junks with square, slatted sails spined like bats' wings and huge yellow eyes painted on the prows came out to greet the *Empress*, followed by single-oared sampans

filled with tiny brown boys who dived into the oily green water to fish up coins tossed by the passengers from the decks. Ahead, Wallis saw the looming mountain called The Peak, dotted with wooden shacks and fronted by the pompous office buildings of the British banks and mercantile companies. There were the sounds of dogs barking, sirens blaring, children screaming, men crying their wares. And the peculiar musky scent of Hong Kong, composed of sandalwood, cinnamon, jute, urine, and tar.

The *Empress of Canada* docked at 4:30 p.m. According to Navy tradition, Win was in the *Pampanga* gig alongside when the vessel berthed at the Royal Naval Anchorage. Win was under orders from Admiral Thomas Washington, fleet commander, to have all possible repairs done because his vessel would be required at Canton and Shanghai.

The week Wallis arrived in Hong Kong, civil war, which had been threatened for several months, exploded in full force across China. The country was without an effective government. The dominant presence was Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Kuomintang, or People's Party, a Canton administration composed of the quarrelsome sons of the merchant and landowner class opposed to the rival military

government in Peking. Sun Yat-sen and his splinter government had come under the influence of the Soviet Union through the Russian agent who called himself Michael Borodin, and by January 1924, at the first Party Congress, power was delegated to a Central Executive Committee that reflected the similar government in Moscow. Within the Kuomintang there were violent conflicts, and the right-wing elements, led by rebel generals, began that summer to clash head-on with the Canton forces. Simultaneously, there was growing resentment over the presence on Chinese soil of large numbers of British, French, and American residents. In the previous century China's rulers had granted permanent leases at nominal sums to foreign powers in the notorious unequal treaties that had established well-protected, militarized, and armed settlements, not subject to Chinese laws, in most of the major cities. China was a country divided in every possible direction, haunted by famine and plague and brutal warfare, sold out to European enterprise while the people suffered in appalling physical conditions.

Hong Kong, though nominally independent of mainland China, reflected the tensions of the giant nation across the straits. There were

constant outbreaks of violence in the Crown Colony. When Wallis arrived, typhoid was raging and there was record heat. With fire and gunshot surrounding her, Wallis moved into the Repulse Bay Hotel and then, reconciled with Win, into a Navy-owned Kowloon apartment that came equipped with cook and maid. Win was busy during that stopover of a few weeks. He had to have the *Pampanga* coaled, provisioned, patched up, and ready for emergency sailing orders, and that was at least a sixteen-hour-a-day job.

On October 16, 1924, the sailing orders arrived. It must have been painful for Wallis, after managing to patch up her shattered marriage, to realize that Win was traveling into conditions of extreme danger. He had been seconded back to Canton. That tormented city was plunged into terror and bloodshed. The so-called Red Army, a disorganized rabble of laborers, dockworkers, and mercenaries, had swept through the city, the insurgents pillaging and raping as they ran with torches through the wooden labyrinth of streets. They massacred many of the Merchant Volunteer Corps, a hastily thrown together vigilante army known as the Chinese Fascists. Five days of street fighting had left a thousand dead in the

streets, hundreds of them women and children burned to death in incendiary fires lit by arsonists or struck down mercilessly by machine gun bullets. When Win sailed into Canton harbor, the sky was black with choking smoke.

In a shambles of violence, famine, and disease, the *Pampanga* docked at the militarily protected Shameen Legation Island, its 3-pounder and 1-pounder guns ready to shell the shore. Three British gunboats followed the ship into the docks, and Wallis was stubbornly on board one of them, probably the *Bee*. She was not to be left behind. She joined Win at the naval quarters in the British-American settlement, the only billet available to Navy wives at the time. The island was closed to foreign civilians. The air was acrid and full of cinders, and both water and food were in very short supply. She became ill from a kidney disorder brought on by the toxic water and was evacuated to Hong Kong on October 28.

With missionaries and evacuee doctors and nurses aboard, the *Pampanga* returned to Hong Kong on November 3 for provisioning before sailing to Kongmoon on the thirtieth to protect American interests and to ship Standard Oil in the region. Something curious took place that month. According to a dossier prepared on

Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's orders by the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) for King George V and Queen Mary in 1935 (when it became crucial to prevent Wallis's becoming Queen of England), Wallis was introduced by Win to the "singing houses" of the Crown Colony. These houses were luxurious brothels; the inmates, recruited from the China sea-board, were trained from their early teens in the arts of love. The client was entertained with stringed instruments, delicately erotic songs, and dances of rare beauty.

There were two kinds of singing (or "sing-song," as they were sometimes known) houses. The best known were the "purple mansions." The only one of these establishments which admitted foreign women was in Repulse Bay. As the visitor entered, a smiling male slave in a blue cotton robe would appear, bowing deeply. He ushered the arrival into an immense, exactly square room with green and white draperies covering the walls.

Beyond the entrance hall there was a long corridor which led to another hall surrounded by sumptuously upholstered chairs and settees. Both doors and walls were decorated with latticework and scrolls in Chinese. There were cabinets fashioned of expensive mahogany and

containing shelves of valuable china ornaments. The girls were customarily dressed in blue or red silk. The upper floor consisted of a series of tiny but elegantly furnished rooms where the prostitutes awaited their customers. Some houses had individual names, such as "Fields of Glittering Flowers" or "Club of the Ducks of the Mandarins."

Other houses of prostitution were known as *Hoa Thing*, or "flower boats," and were moored or floated in the harbor. The boats were 60 to 80 feet long and 15 feet wide; inside they were lavishly carpeted and furnished, and crystal lamps dangled from the ceilings. It was customary for an individual to hire the entire boat for the evening and to begin with a multicourse dinner at 9 p.m. When the dinner was over, the guest would take his companion of the night across a small wooden platform to one of a series of boats that was attached by ropes to the mother vessel.

According to witnesses of the Chinese dossier, Wallis was taught "perverse practices" in these houses of prostitution. The practices can only mean lesbian displays and the art of Fang Chung. This skill, practiced for centuries, involved relaxation of the male partner through a prolonged and carefully modulated massage of

the nipples, stomach, thighs, and, after a deliberately protracted delay, the genitals. The exponent of Fang Chung was taught the nerve centers of the body so that the brushing movement of the fingers had the effect of arousing even the most moribund of men. Fang Chung was especially helpful in cases of premature ejaculation. By the application of a firm, specific touch between the urethra and the anus, climax could be delayed. Masseuses delayed intromission as long as possible to remove the fear of failure in intercourse that afflicted men suffering from dysfunction.

According to a close friend of Wallis's, she had no sooner had an opportunity to apply this technique than she received a shock. Win left her in order to share an apartment with a handsome young painter whose looks and talent had earned him much attention in the Crown Colony. By November 21 she was on her way, no doubt in great distress, to Shanghai aboard the *Empress of Russia* with the charming, 42-year-old Mrs. F. H. (Mary) Sadler, wife of Admiral Sadler, commanding officer of the USS *Saratoga* and head of naval intelligence (as arranged long ago in Washington).

Long before the *Empress of Russia* docked, on November 22, streams of brownish-yellow

mud darkened the water of the China Sea, announcing the fact that Shanghai was built on marshy river flats. The vessel steamed slowly up the Whangpoo River, past frail wooden villages, weeping-willow trees, and rolling green paddy fields under a khaki sky. The river was so crowded with small craft that the ship could barely edge through them. At last, Wallis saw the looming brick chimneys of the Shanghai Power Company belching smoke. There was a stink of sulfur and coal. She disembarked by tender, over water filled with old newspapers, dead birds, and dung. Ahead of her lay the Bund, the famous waterfront esplanade with its jerry-built bank and office buildings and its jumble of electric signs. She walked up the steps from the jetty as the luggage was brought by the deckhands and piled on the wharf stones. There was a line of rickshaws as far as the eye could see. The drivers, their ribs exposed against dry yellow skin, shrieked for custom. There was a cluster of wheelbarrows, pushcarts, and bicycles; coolies trotted about with enormous bamboo poles slung over their narrow shoulders.

Wallis and Mrs. Sadler undertook the short trip to the fashionable Astor House Hotel; with civil war raging, soldiers and police stopped

them every few yards to examine their passports. When at last they reached the hotel, they found a shabby grandeur. It was made up of four brick houses linked by stone passageways. The lobby was huge and red-carpeted, lit by ancient cut-glass chandeliers. There was a circular leather couch in the center surrounding an enormous brass bowl containing ferns. There were red ceramic lions, red plush and gilt seats, and bronze bowls of paper lilies. Fans revolved slowly in the ceiling, disturbing flies. The rooms were like cabins, with bunks as well as beds; the corridors were painted with portholes and *trompe l'oeil* seascapes—an idea Wallis would one day use at her house in Paris. The manager was Captain Harry Morton of the Royal Navy (retired), who ran the hotel like a ship, with trumpet fanfares to announce meals. Wallis and Mary Sadler stayed at the Astor House for ten days.

Shanghai was an amazing spectacle in the grip of war. Each day there were skirmishes and killings. Although the international settlement was protected by U.S. and British Marines so that the old, privileged life could continue, there were bursts of gunfire less than a block from the Astor House. Flames engulfed jerry-built shanties and tenements, and screams

and shouts could be heard from the native quarters as the police suppressed the maraudings of the Green Gang. There were opium dens and brothels and sinister dark alleys, but there were also black-tie parties at the grand mansions of the very rich, including the sumptuous home of the Jewish merchant prince Sir Victor Sassoon, which was staffed by seventy-five servants. There were lavish department stores, including the Sun Sun, the Sincere, and the Wing On, that offered all the treasures of the Orient. Wallis bought ivory elephants with their trunks up for luck, carved ivory boxes, and a Chinese screen.

She eagerly entered into the exciting social life of the city. Behind the walls and the bristling lines of infantry, the British and American tradesmen and the colonial officers defiantly enjoyed a life of luxury and ease at the Eiwo Racetrack and the clubs and hotel *thés dansants* while opposing forces fought for possession of the sprawling native quarters of the metropolis. Newspapers show Wallis attending many race meets that season.

A report on Wallis's activities at the time, issued just one day before Pearl Harbor, has turned up in the FBI files, declassified on appeal to the associate attorney general, after

seven years of waiting, on April 30, 1987. Although the informant was confused about Commander Spencer's rank and location, the report is intriguing in other respects; the long time during which it had to be considered and reconsidered for possible release by one committee after another indicates that it was not regarded as the work of a mere gossip or aggrieved crank:

FBI, December 6, 1941:

*Confidential.* Memorandum for D. M. Ladd by P. J. Wacks of the Bureau (Washington).

On September 26, 1941, at 2:30 p.m., (blank) contacted the writer in the latter's office concerning the Duchess of Windsor. (Blank) advised that the first husband was a midshipman [sic] of the United States Navy whom the Duchess met in San Diego, California; that the midshipman was subsequently ordered to Singapore [sic]; that the Duchess followed him to that city where she frequented various night clubs and contacted various naval officers of both the United States and British navies; that the British authorities received information that the Duchess was attempting to obtain information concerning Naval secrets from the British officers she met; that as a result of her

activities her husband . . . was transferred from that post of duty.

Was this mere idle gossip? The informant was a person who must have known something. But what? If Wallis was spying for some enemy power, it could only have been Russia, which was America and Britain's opponent in China. John Costello, author of *The Pacific War* and an able historian, says that Foreign Office rumors, recently confirmed by a reliable source in London, state that Wallis was used by the Soviets during her sojourn. It is all a fascinating subject of conjecture, impossible to authenticate at this stage.

The American-born biographer, historian, and editor Leslie Field, who has recently been working at Buckingham Palace in consultation with Her Majesty the Queen on a book on the subject of the royal jewels, states that the China dossier, which, she says, people she knows have examined in detail, contains still further damaging information about Wallis. Mrs. Field states that Wallis was involved in extensive drug peddling at the time and that her activities in drug dealings were not determined until years later when, on royal instruc-

tions, Hong Kong authorities managed to obtain the facts from various individuals in China who were aware of them. Also, Mrs. Field reveals, Wallis was backed by wealthy men as a high roller at the gambling tables. In view of the fact that gambling at the time in China was totally corrupt and very often the "right" people were allowed to win at the tables, it is not surprising that she succeeded in winning substantial sums at baccarat, roulette, and blackjack. Mrs. Field says that Wallis was notoriously a kept woman and that even during her marriage to Win she was bedded by rich men.

Wallis went to Peking on December 4, 1924; no travel by American women to the capital was permitted at the time except on official business. The obese warlord General Feng Yü-hsiang, who rejoiced in wearing Napoleonic braided uniforms and carrying a telescope, had seized power in the city and had driven the "boy emperor" of China into hiding at the Japanese Legation when the British Legation refused entry. The rival warlord, Marshal Chang Tso-lin, had marched out of Peking, taking with him 25,000 troops. The confused and volatile situation was about to erupt into severe violence. Sun Yat-sen had just returned from Japan, mustering support for a coup d'état

which was to wrest power from Feng and would be aided by Marshal Chang.

The railroad tracks were so badly broken by warring forces that the famous *Blue Express* could no longer make its way from Shanghai to Peking. Wallis and Mary Sadler had to take the SS *Shuntien*, a 1200-ton vessel of the B. and S. Company, under the command of Captain Einar Christiensen, to Tientsin via Weiheiwei and Chifoo; at Tientsin they would change to a train for the rest of the journey. The voyage was beset by typhoons and was an agony of rolling decks, crashing dishes and furniture, and stifling heat.

In an indication of the importance of her mission, Wallis was met in person on December 10 at the Tientsin dock by Clarence E. Gauss, orientalist and consul general, who later became the widely admired World War II ambassador to Free China. Gauss told Wallis and Mary that the U.S. Army had commandeered the train to Peking but that Chang's entire forces were posted along the tracks.

Mary Sadler fell ill with stomach trouble and returned to Shanghai. Wallis reached the Tientsin Central National Railway Station on the morning of the eleventh. The ramshackle depot was an infernal spectacle of typhoid and

famine victims, rabble soldiery, hysterically crying children, and exhausted women fighting for seats. Wallis had been given a special military authorization and still carried a special intelligence-authorized naval passport. When she boarded the 8-coach Inter-Allied train, reserved for official or military personnel, at 12:10 p.m., she was subjected to a close examination, and at Pei-Tsang station, the first whistle-stop, she was again questioned as Chang's troops came aboard, marching up and down the corridors.

It was a ghastly journey. The engine was old and rusty, the cold was intense in this northern region, and the windows, shattered by gunshot, let in icy winds; there was no food or water; the toilets were mere holes in the floor. The soldiery under First Lieutenant E. M. Brandon was out of control and drunken; there were constant engine breakdowns followed by screeches of brakes and mysterious, fierce cries as the train lingered in featureless low hills and by grave mounds and paddy fields for hours, awaiting refueling and repairs. A journey that should have taken only ninety minutes took thirty-eight hours.

Long before the train chugged a day late into Peking, Wallis could see the lines of Marshal Chang Tso-lin's machine guns along the

tracks. When she finally arrived, she was met in the clangng darkness of the station, which was in the grip of a power failure, by Commander Louis M. Little of the Marines. She must have been carrying very important documents; it was a rule that a commanding officer was never to leave a major military post in civil war without some pressing reason, such as contacting a courier.

As Little's gray armored Navy car drove through the plaza and the Hatamen Gate to the protected Legation Quarter, the first thing Wallis would have seen was a line of heads stuck on 30-foot bamboo poles: signals by General Feng, who was now camped in the western hills awaiting possible battle with Marshal Chang and Sun Yat-sen, that he would brook no rebelliousness in the city.

Peking was overcome with a thunderous sense of terror. When Wallis checked into the Grand Hôtel, a riot of chinoiserie, the papers were reporting that Feng's enemies were being dragged into the parks and decapitated by sword without benefit of trial. Day by day, a tense and anxious British and American population awaited word of Sun Yat-sen's imminent arrival and a full-scale outburst of Communist activity against all foreigners. Suspense hung

over the ancient city with its walled cities within the city, its vast gateways and yellow and blue roofs, its cruelly cold, dusty winds from the plain, its dominating color of recently dried blood.

The Grand Hôtel de Pékin was an oasis for Wallis and the other bedraggled arrivals from Tientsin. The lobby had a curio shop, a French bookstore, and an ornamental fountain. The grand marble staircase rose to the glass doors of the Imperial Ballroom. Soon she would discover the dining room with its minstrel gallery and British dance orchestra.

Her room looked over the Legation Quarter, which was guarded by a line of blue-clad American Marines. Beyond the quarter she could see the old Tartar wall, with its L-shaped watch-towers and ornamental gates, and the shiny blue tiles of the Temple of Heaven. On the hour rang the iron bells of the ancient Tower of Kublai Khan, and at four every afternoon, according to time-honored tradition, a thousand pigeons were released from wicker baskets into the ice-blue winter sky; the tiny bamboo flutes tucked under the birds' wings created an eerie, plaintive sound.

While in Peking, Wallis became romantically entangled with Alberto da Zara, the

suavely handsome, blond, 35-year-old naval attaché to the Italian Embassy. Da Zara descended from a long line of cavalry officers, from whom he inherited his valiant and gallant manners as well as a deep knowledge and love of horses. She first met him at the embassy compound at an open house which took place every Friday evening.

Well educated and with a grasp of several languages, he was in youth sent abroad every summer, where he built up a number of international contacts. In 1907 he fulfilled an adolescent dream and entered the Annapolis naval academy, where he met and became acquainted with Earl Winfield Spencer.

In May 1922 he was assigned command of a ship, the *Carlotto*, berthed at Hankow, China; he sailed on to Shanghai in November of that year. His memoirs, *La Pelle di un Ammiraglio (Admiral's Skin)* (Mondadori, 1949), contain vivid descriptions of military missions along the Yangtze River and of the social life of China at the time.

He took up his post of naval attaché in Peking a few months before Wallis arrived, in the spring of 1924. He observed in his book: "The prospect of commanding a barracks and to carry out the role of naval, military and aviation

attaché in a country without a navy or aviation, and with an army of feudal militia, did not appeal."

Da Zara's passion was horses. Wallis joined him enthusiastically at the racetrack. She had no real interest in horses; as usual, she knew what she was doing. He wrote in his memoirs:

The winter of 1924–1925 was a great season for Italian participants in the Peking Horse Shows . . . without distinction of age or sex, of profession or social status, everyone cheered for someone: a horse or rider, an athlete or team, a club or city; ministers and consuls, customs officers, bank directors, industrialists, great dames and young beauties.

He added gallantly:

Among these, one of the most frequently present fans was Mrs. Wallis Spencer. In those days she wore a classical hairdo which fit the beauty of her forehead and her eyes, with her hair, as the Americans say, off the face, stroked, as I would say, to which she has kept faithful until the present day. Already then she expressed a fondness for the color which would become famous as Wallis blue. It matched her eyes.

Wallis became deeply fascinated by da Zara. He was a poet, an addict of d'Annunzio, to whose works he introduced her. Authoritative as a commander, he was discreet and generous. Wallis loved his proud, independent, untamed spirit. His aide in China, Lieutenant Giuseppe Pighini (now a retired admiral), remembers da Zara's affair with Wallis vividly:

Mrs. Simpson and da Zara had a very close relationship which from love developed into lasting friendship. Da Zara used to say about her that although she was not beautiful she was extremely attractive and had very refined and cultivated tastes. Her conversation was brilliant and she had the capacity of bringing up the right subject of conversation with anyone she came in contact with and entertaining them on that subject. This quality of conversation and her great knowledge and love of horses were things which she had in common with da Zara.

Soon the affair cooled, but Wallis remained friendly with da Zara.

Pighini remembers that for years da Zara carried an autographed photograph of Wallis wherever he went; it was signed, "To You, Wally." In 1938, when da Zara's ship the

*Montecuccoli* was docked in Melbourne, a reporter found the picture by snooping in the cabin and published a story about it in the *Melbourne Age* the next day. Da Zara was furious.

Alberto da Zara undoubtedly cemented Wallis's love of Italy and conviction of the value of fascism as the only possible block to communism, views which would, in turn, soon cement her to the Prince of Wales.

Wallis discovered the Imperial Yellow City, the Forbidden Violet City, and the fairy-tale beauty of the sea palaces built on icy lakes spanned by marble bridges and dotted with frosted lotus leaves. She had letters of introduction to French intelligence and German officials combating Soviet influences in the region and to the elegant aesthete and architect George Sebastian, a Romanian who had been raised in London and Paris. A beau from Paris days, Gerry Green, was intelligence liaison at the U.S. Consulate and took her dancing at the Grand Hotel de Pekin dining room. One night Wallis saw a familiar face among the other dancing couples at the Grand Hotel: Katherine Bigelow, now Katherine Rogers, the young widow who had befriended Wallis in Coronado, southern California, just six years

before. Katherine's husband, Herman Rogers, was a U.S. intelligence officer attached to the local embassy. (His family confirms this fact.) He liaised with Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Barnard, U.S. military attaché, and Dr. Jacob Gould Sherman, American minister to Peking. Rogers was a classic example of the man who had everything; his only flaw was that he was a very unconvincing novelist. He was the son of the millionaire railroad tycoon, Archibald Rogers, whose estate, Crumwold Hall, was two houses away from Franklin D. Roosevelt's at Hyde Park, N.Y. Tall, handsome, athletic, Rogers was educated at Groton and Yale. He had retired at the age of 35 and after his marriage to Katherine, whom he had met originally in France during World War I, had decided to devote the rest of his life to travel, leisure, trying to write the "great American novel," and the acquisition of culture.

In the normal tradition of intelligence contacts, the Rogerses billeted Wallis with them at their house, 4 Shih Chia Huting, in the Legation Quarter. They did everything possible to make her feel at home; she had her own rickshaw driver and her own maid. On weekends, Herman and Katherine drove her to their rented Buddhist temple in the foothills of the

mountains that doubled as lookout post on General Feng's army. Wallis joined them in horseback riding and in playing poker, contract bridge, and the inevitable Mah-Jongg. However, the circumstances of her stay were not nearly as idyllic as she later claimed.

According to a friend of Wallis's, she entered into a bizarre ménage à trois with Herman and Katherine. This created great tension and differences, followed by quarrels; the mutual jealousies and conflicts of feeling deeply upset her. The atmosphere in the house became charged. There was much gossip among the servants.

And at the same time there was the war: there were gunshots, explosions, fires, and the screams of men and women, fully audible from the Legation Quarter. Sun Yat-sen arrived on New Year's eve, mortally stricken with cancer of the liver; his grievous condition canceled out his plans for the *coup d'état*, and he made an uneasy truce with General Feng while lying in agony in a local hospital. There was fear that when he passed away China would disintegrate into even more meaningless violence and only the rising military figure of Chiang Kai-shek would offer hope for a sustained government. When Sun Yat-sen died on March 11, Peking

was plunged into mourning. Black banners fluttered from the battlements and delegations arrived from all parts of the civilized world to pay their last respects.

The cold of Peking was almost unendurable. The only heat in the Rogerses' house was supplied by copper braziers whose feebly glowing coals did little to relieve the chill and filled the rooms with unpleasant acrid fumes. Wallis's favorite rickshaw driver was crushed by an automobile, and by April there were outbursts of violence reminiscent of those in Shanghai. But the worst problem Wallis had to deal with lay in her own self. The stress of her situation with Herman was by now unendurable. Even the attentions of Mussolini's naval attaché, Alberto da Zara, did not satisfy her. There was no alternative but for her to leave as soon as possible.

When Wallis returned to Hong Kong by train on March 21, Win had just left the *Pampanga* and was about to command the *Whipple* at harbor in Shanghai and then en route to the United States. They tried to patch up their relationship once more and took a busman's honeymoon aboard the *President Grant* to Shanghai on March 23.

That she was under special orders from Rear Admiral C.V. McVay of the South China

Fleet is clear from the fact that Navy wives, along with all other civilians, were forbidden entry to Shanghai at that time. Much of the city had been occupied after a violent conflict in which Marshal Chi-hsieh-yuan defeated the Army of Marshal Chang and drove 12,000 of his followers out of the city or into the International Settlement. As the Shanghai Volunteer Corps clashed with the Chi militia, the gutters ran once more with blood, and the journey from the wharf to the quarters where Wallis and Ernest were billeted was exceedingly dangerous. The next weeks were perilous for any American in Shanghai.

Wallis left for that city again in May. On the twenty-third of May an incident occurred which placed Wallis and every American there in jeopardy. Three months earlier Chinese mill workers under Japanese management had struck; the ensuing conflict between labor and management resulted in violence. Now the workers struck again; there was a ferocious fight with sticks and guns, and one worker was killed and seven injured. The British-controlled Shanghai Municipal Council failed to discipline the Japanese but instead arrested the strikers. Following a memorial service for the murdered worker, there was a mass demonstra-

tion of 3000 students. A British commanding officer ordered members of the Sikh Indian militia to fire into the crowd; eleven Chinese students were killed and thirty-five others were injured. The result was an unprecedented outburst of "antiforeignism" across the nation and a general strike. In Hankow, on June 10 and 11, British and Japanese troops killed 15 and wounded 100 Chinese. On June 23 the British killed or injured hundreds more on Shamteen Island and the *Pampanga* was shelled from the shore. By now Win had sailed to the United States as commander of the *Whipple*, while Wallis was stranded in Shanghai, unable to sail for weeks and subject, as a courier, to being kidnapped and murdered by militant Communists at any time.

While in Shanghai, Wallis met and became involved romantically with another handsome Fascist, the dark, moody, proud 21-year-old Count Galeazzo Ciano, a keen supporter of Mussolini. His father, Admiral Ciano, had taken part in Mussolini's famous march on Rome and was among the figures involved in the murder of Matteotti. Later, Galeazzo Ciano would be the Italian foreign minister. Fascinated by China, the count was on a recon-

naissance trip to Peking. At the time he was a student in Rome; later, in 1927, he would be vice-consul.

According to Mrs. Milton E. Miles, whose husband was an officer on the *Pampanga* and later became an admiral:

Wallis went up the coast to Qunhuangdao, the beautiful summer resort where the Great Wall of China meets the sea. Ciano came down from Peking to spend a lot of time with her there. It was the gossip among us Navy wives in Hong Kong; it was an open scandal.

Wallis became pregnant by Ciano. Since she was still married to Win, giving birth to a child out of wedlock would have destroyed her chances of getting an equitable divorce and could have been so great a disgrace that it might have caused Win's cashiering from the Navy. According to Mrs. Miles, she attempted an abortion which destroyed her chances of ever having a child and caused her severe gynecological problems that dogged her the rest of her life. Mrs. Miles remembers that when she arrived in Hong Kong on September 7 to join her husband, he told her that Wallis had been

in the gynecological ward of the Women's Hospital on August 20.

Wallis returned to Shanghai on the *Empress of Canada* to recover. The strike was continuing, although American ships were allowed in and out of the harbor. In a severe rainstorm on August 29, Wallis sailed, in very poor health, in a first-class cabin aboard the Dollar Line's *President McKinley* via Kobe, Yokohama, and Honolulu to Seattle. When she arrived, after a rough trip, on September 8, she was immediately hospitalized.

Win had meanwhile left his command of the *Whipple* and was about to assume command of the USS *Wright* at Hampton Roads, leading a torpedo boat squadron. Wallis remained in touch with him; concerned about her health, though apparently not knowing the cause of her illness, he met with her in Chicago, and they made an attempt at a reconciliation. They returned to Washington by train together in mid-September; soon he was transferred to the *Wright*. They remained good friends.

Win, like Wallis, had established strong connections with the Mussolini administration in Italy. That fall he entertained the Italian soldier and pioneer air ace Italo Balbo, the early

Fascist leader and Ciano associate who was building up the Mussolini air force at the time and who would eventually become Air Minister. Balbo had been in charge of the Blackshirt militia, and with Ciano's father he had been a leader of the march on Rome. His friendship with Win continued until his death; he was shot down in 1940 due to an error by an Italian artillery post at Tobruk. In 1936 Win was awarded the high Decoration of Cavalier of the Order of the Crown of Italy for his assistance to Mussolini in matters concerning the Italian air force.

She stayed with her mother in the capital for three weeks, recuperating from her illness. From time to time she traveled to Wakefield Manor, Front Royal, which was scarcely changed from the days of her childhood. Her cousin Lelia was living there with her husband, General George Barnett, who had just retired after eleven years in San Francisco as commandant of the U.S. Marines in the Pacific. The Barnetts took Wallis under their wing; they put her in touch with their able attorney, Aubrey ("Kingfish") Weaver, of Weaver and Armstrong, Front Royal.

Weaver told Wallis that at Warrenton, across the Blue Ridge Mountains in Fauquier

County, Virginia, divorces could easily be obtained on the basis of the husband's desertion. It would be a simple matter to have Win write a letter backdated to June 1924, stating that he would not live with her again. The letter would be headed *USS Pampanga*.

She would have to establish residence in Warrenton for at least a year and she must not leave the town for longer than a few weeks. Wallis listened carefully, but surprisingly she had a fit of nostalgia and made yet another effort to patch up the marriage. She wrote to Win on the *USS Wright*; he met her at Aubrey Weaver's office at Front Royal. He told Wallis he wanted to be free.

In a spirit of resignation, Wallis traveled to Warrenton on October 3, 1925. The town was close to Middleburg, where she had been at Burrland, and it was in the heart of fox-hunting country. The horse shows were focuses of all the major social events of the community. Conversation hinged upon the studbook and the saddle.

Wallis stayed with the socially prominent horse owner Mrs. Sterling Larrabee at her historic home, Oakwood. Corinne Mustin, who had just married Captain George Murray following the death at sea of Henry C. Mustin,

had arranged the introduction. After some weeks Wallis moved to the 50-year-old Warren Green Hotel, a red-brick imitation-colonial building with a double-deck veranda and a glassed-in sun porch. Although the hotel had seen better days, it was still, with its plush seats and potted ferns and flowered-wallpapered lobby, possessed of a musty Victorian charm. Wallis moved into Room 212 on the second floor, overlooking the square and the Fauquier National Bank. The furniture was uninspiring, with brass bed, dresser, water jug and bowl, and cracked leather chair; she got permission from the manager to refurbish it for a long stay. She put out her boxes and elephants and her Chinese screen and felt a little better.

She was close enough to the scenes of her early life to find friends whom she had known at the beginning. Phoebe Randolph, who had been at Arundell as her classmate, was now Mrs. Henry Poole, of local note, and Florence Campbell, who had been a friend of hers and Mary Kirk's at Oldfields, was now Mrs. Edward Russell, a social leader. Both entertained her at their homes. Wallis also caught up with her handsome early beau, Lloyd Tabb, and with the doctor who delivered her, Lewis Allen, who

exhibited prize mares and geldings at the Warrenton horse shows.

While out walking one afternoon, Wallis met another of her early flames, Hugh Spilman, a blond and good-looking former footballer who had dated her when he was at the exclusive Gilman School in Baltimore and she was at Oldfields; he had been in the dancing class in which she had learned the one-step. He told her he was working as a teller, to learn the business, at the Fauquier National Bank. They became close in those drawn-out weeks of boredom. Wallis would drop by the bank and drink Coca-Colas with Hugh through straws from the bottle until the manager ordered Hugh back to his window. On Sundays they played golf; they spent evenings at the golf club café, where they played poker until the small hours. Spilman remembered Wallis as a bad loser; she played ruthlessly and one night, when she realized she wasn't going to win the pot, she deliberately upset the table, pretending the cat had done it.

Spilman asked her to marry him as soon as her divorce was over; she refused politely, pointing out that if she married again it would only be for money. Spilman manfully settled for second best. He joined her at lawn parties

and second-floor parlor dances and private society gatherings at the Warren Green Hotel; they danced the Charleston and the Black Bottom and the fox-trot and went to see movies together. It was a harmless, pleasant romance.

Alice Montague Warfield Rasin married for a third time that year, eccentrically failing to advise her daughter until the deed was done. Her husband was the aforementioned Charles Gordon Allen, who had the same characteristics as her previous two: he was lazy, weak, and soft. He worked in a dull position as a legal clerk handling old soldiers' problems at the Veterans Administration Building in Washington. Wallis felt sorry for her mother, who seemed to have no need for strong and forceful men, and for Allen, whose life had a grinding monotony. She grew to feel a kind of pitying affection for this sad man as time went on.

At Christmas 1926 Wallis answered an invitation from her old friend Mary Raffray and Mary's husband Jacques to stay with them in New York at their "Henry Jamesian" townhouse in Washington Square. Her decision to travel there resulted in a meeting that was to change her life and propel her on her most dangerous adventure so far.

# ERNEST

Late on the afternoon of Christmas day, Jacques and Mary and their friends and relatives were gathered around the tree when the doorbell rang and Jacques went to answer it. Two men walked in; one of them made so little impression on Wallis that within days she had forgotten his name or what he did for a living. But the other man had the same strong effect on her as Winfield Spencer had some ten years earlier. Jacques introduced him as Ernest Aldrich Simpson; he had a fake British accent and a slightly haughty manner. His brown hair was lightly flecked with gold. He had mild, sympathetic, dark-blue eyes, pink cheeks, and a square jaw. Like Win, he had a dark mustache.

Well-built, he walked with a cocky, confident military swagger. He was 29 years old.

As the Christmas evening went on, and presents were unwrapped and dinner served, Wallis became intrigued. Simpson had a polished, suave manner, an air of good breeding and intellect, and a well-balanced disposition that was without the underlying sense of danger that had unwisely drawn her to Win. The chief problem was that he was married, to the former Dorothea Parsons Dechert, daughter and granddaughter of well-known Massachusetts Supreme Court judges, and the couple had a young daughter, Audrey.

Ernest Simpson was a partner in Simpson, Spence and Young, a company which bought and sold ships. The firm had extensive dealings on both sides of the Atlantic and had offices in the City of London and agents in Hamburg, Germany, where it worked in close alliance with the Hamburg-America Line, and in Italy, where it made deals with Mussolini's government. Simpson had left Harvard without graduating to follow the impulse of an intense love of England; both his parents came from the British Isles. He joined the cadet battalion of the Coldstream Guards. Then, at the end of World War I, he was compelled, due to his

father's negligent management, to surrender his commission and take up the reins of the company. But he remained ultra-British in New York: he walked the avenues in bowler hat, Guards tie, and plain, dark suit, carrying a tightly rolled umbrella as if he were in Mayfair.

This impeccably dapper and correct young American gentleman had a secret, so carefully kept that not even his own daughter knew it. He was Jewish. His father had changed the family name from Solomons because he feared, not without reason, that the business world would close its doors to a new and struggling Jewish company. Because both he and his father were fair of complexion and the masquerade could be sustained, Ernest neglected to tell his first wife and he joined several clubs that never admitted Jewish members. He was especially careful to conceal the truth in Germany, where anti-Semitism was even more pervasive than it was in the ruling and commercial classes of Manhattan and London.

Wallis had no inkling of Ernest's racial background. Throughout her life her attitude toward Jews was ambiguous and changeable; she would eventually be close to members of the two richest (and interrelated) Jewish families, the Sassoons and the Rothschilds, yet she

could, according to Stephen Birmingham, scream out about "kikes." In this she was typical of her time; Cecil Beaton was equally known for using this term: in 1938 he scandalized the world by using it in a notorious cartoon.

Wallis should have returned to Warrenton to sustain the residency requirement called for by the divorce, but instead she boldly embarked on a liaison with Ernest, despite the fact that Dorothea Simpson was present at his East 68th Street townhouse. Wallis and he had much in common. Both enjoyed good books (he was better read than she); both liked to collect figurines and knickknacks; both knew a great deal about silver and china. Ernest was an expert in many fields, including painting, poetry, and music. He was representative of a now-endangered species: the businessman of culture. He took Wallis to museums, galleries, bookstores, libraries; she learned all he had to teach her.

He had other advantages. He appeared to be financially secure. He had perfect manners and knew how to order wines and food. It was true he smoked—she hated smoking—but he liked only the finest pipe tobacco, Havana cigars, and Sobranie or Turkish cigarettes. He had a couple of expensive touring cars. He was re-

spectful, even subservient, and Wallis had never been able to release the dominating side of her personality in the way she wanted.

Their relationship began to develop through bridge and poker and a trip to the Army-Navy football game. But Wallis felt it was a dead end. Ernest refused to consider a divorce. There was the presence of his child. Wallis broke with him for a time. First, she moved from the Raffrays' house to a tiny room at the quasi-British New Weston Hotel. Then she tried to sell an article to *Vogue*; it was rejected. She enlisted with a secretarial school but rapidly withdrew. She was beginning to feel sorry for herself.

She was partly consoled by meeting an old friend from San Diego days, the ugly but charming Benjamin Thaw, who was in charge of the Latin American Division of the State Department and was married to Consuelo Morgan, elder sister of the famous twins Gloria Vanderbilt and Thelma Furness. Consuelo, Gloria, and Thelma were gorgeous, the spoiled and willful children of an American diplomat, Harry Hays Morgan. When Consuelo was 17, Mama Morgan had arranged for her to marry the wealthy French aristocrat Count Jean Marie Emmanuel de Maupas du Juglart in

Brussels, where H. H. Morgan was consul general. Two years later the couple was divorced; Consuelo was charged with adultery. By the mid-1920s Gloria and Thelma were the buzz of society; they inherited a smoldering, dark, Latin glamour from their Chilean grandmother. Refusing to wear the short skirts of their era, they paraded through society parties *a deux*, with their hair severely dressed, long strands of pearls, industrial-sized diamonds, and dramatically pale complexions. Thelma married James ("Junior") Vale Converse, grandson of a founder of Bell Telephone; the marriage didn't last. Gloria married Reginald Vanderbilt, a horse-fancying society lush and the number one catch in New York. He had inherited \$30 million in 1901. When his uncle Alfred went down on the *Lusitania*, he got half a million more.

In 1923 Consuelo married Benjamin Thaw; the Thaws were one of the reigning families of Pittsburgh. Soon afterward, Gloria's child, Little Gloria, was born. In 1925 Reggie Vanderbilt died of drink; Thelma married Lord (Marmaduke) Furness, owner of the Furness-Withy shipping line that ran cruise vessels from New York to Bermuda. Benny Thaw arranged for Wallis to stay in Pittsburgh with his

cousin, the immensely rich, 85-year-old Mary Copley Thaw; at the same time he was talking about Wallis with some other friends, the Morgan Schillers, who were looking for attractive women to work for them, improbably selling construction elevators. Staying with Mary Thaw had its pleasant aspects but it also had its problems. Mary's mansion, Oaklawn, was an immense gothic pile, filled with antiques, gloomy landscape paintings, and a collection of Corots. There were seventy rooms, a dozen live-in servants, and a Paris chef. Mary was deeply troubled. She was suing her grandson for \$600,000 she claimed he had extorted from her. She was being blackmailed for some alleged shady business dealings. Above all, she was tortured by the manic presence on the scene of her dissolute son Harry K. Thaw, who in 1906 had shot and killed New York's most prominent architect, Stanford White, on the Madison Square Garden roof over the famous showgirl Evelyn Nesbit Thaw.

While Wallis was at Oaklawn, Harry Thaw, who had been saved from the electric chair by Mary's money and influence, and had served years in a mental asylum, kept arriving without warning in hysterical, terrifying rages. He would take off to New York, where his ex-wife,

Evelyn Nesbit, had a nightclub; storming into the club, he would knock all the bottles and tables to the floor and stamp on the broken glass.

Wallis was unable to get the job with Morgan Schiller because of her poor grasp of mathematics, necessary in dealing with specifications, and she returned via New York to Warrenton. Depressed during that spring of 1927, she was consoled when Aunt Bessie, who was now acting as paid companion to Mary B. Adams, owner of the Washington *Evening Star*, offered her a free trip to Europe. Just before sailing, on June 16, Wallis made her official divorce application through her Front Royal lawyers.

The European trip was meaningless and bland. In Paris, in late October, Wallis heard that her Uncle Sol had died of heart failure in Baltimore. He had been very annoyed by her divorce proposal, and he had been severely depressed by the \$3 million worth of damage to his railroads caused by the Florida hurricane in July that year. The constant struggle with rival railroad interests and his exhausting lobbying in the Florida cities had worn him out. At first, Wallis, who owed so much to him, was sorry

that she had not been available to attend the funeral. But she was greatly displeased by the will when it was read a few days later. Uncle Sol had left her only the interest from \$15,000 worth of shares in his railroad companies and in the related Alleghany Company and in the Texas Company. She had expected a slice of his \$5 million, and she furiously began a law-suit against the trustees of the estate, in the form of a caveat. Using her proxy, Josephine Warfield, granddaughter of her Uncle Henry, she charged that Warfield was mentally incompetent and emotionally disturbed at the time he made the will and that his signature was forged.

In December 1927 Judge George Latham Fletcher granted her divorce in Warrenton; among the depositions by her mother and others was the letter Win was supposed to have sent from China, complete with American postage stamps, a detail that the judge chose to overlook. There is no question that this was a collusive divorce, since Wallis's statement that she had not seen Win in four years was contradicted by the evidence and she had omitted any mention of China from her deposition, thereby perjuring herself.

Now that Wallis was free, she turned her mind back to Ernest Simpson and returned to New York to resume her affair with him. Dorothea learned of this while she was ailing at the American Hospital in Paris and filed divorce proceedings there. Prematurely gray-haired and frail, this Massachusetts gentlewoman years later allowed herself to say to Cleveland Amory, "Wallis was very smart. She stole my husband while I was ill." Later in 1928 Ernest decided he would take up the managing directorship of his company in London; his father was increasingly negligent and was involved in a somewhat questionable liaison with a woman in Paris.

Wallis needed time; she was fond of Ernest, but she wasn't in love with him. The Rogerses came to the rescue; they had moved from Peking back to their ancient haunted villa, Lou Viei, in Cannes, in the exotic hillside suburb known as Californie, and, past conflicts and emotional complications forgotten, invited her to stay with them. The villa had been partly remodeled by Barry Dierks, a talented American architect.

Wallis arrived in perfect winter weather;

Californie was a riot of hibiscus, frangipani, and coral trees, and at night the scent of flowering jasmine filled the air. The villa was festooned with creepers and had a striking view of the Mediterranean. Herman and Katherine took Wallis out, with various eligible bachelors, dancing at the Palm Beach Club or sailing on chartered yachts under the stars. The Riviera was dreamlike in its charm and tropical loveliness, and Wallis again bathed in the luxury of great wealth.

She discussed with Herman and Katherine whether she should marry Ernest. They urged her to follow her own instincts. It didn't take long for her to make up her mind. Ernest offered freedom from want and a safe haven. Word that his divorce had been granted meant that he was free. She had no money. He was up and coming in British financial circles. She cabled her acceptance of his long-standing proposal and left for London in late June 1928.

Her timing, as always, was perfect. Just as she had arrived in China in the midst of civil war, so she reached London in time for the height of the social season, which officially began on July 1. It was a dazzling month. The Prince of Wales, who continued to fascinate Wallis, and whom she had not seen since that

crowded night seven and a half years earlier in San Diego, had just launched a series of parties at York House, his grace and favor home at St. James's Palace. He was busy shattering the pomp and circumstance of court life by featuring at these fancy shindigs a dance orchestra, a vaudeville, and cabaret dancers and by inviting oceans of the "gilded youth" of London. The sight of flappers and dashing Mayfair young men drinking cocktails and dancing quicksteps, fox-trots, and Charlestons in halls that once had echoed to the voices of Henry VIII and his courtiers was too much for the more staid figures of the royal court.

London was glorying in every hour of its summer social life while most British people had neither bath nor heating nor any hope of rising above their depressed circumstances. In addition to gala receptions and dinner parties with upward of 300 guests, there were, that July, the Olympia International Horse Show and the Wimbledon Tennis Championship Matches. The weather was warm and golden and the skies were blue. Wallis, who was happy to be reunited with Ernest, moved into an apartment at Stanmore Court; they shared an excitement in London scandals with his handful of friends.

Among the many events that were exciting the interest of society, these three stood out: Sir Leo Chiozza Money had been found in Hyde Park in an improper situation with an underage girl; the girl accused the police of using the third degree on her, and so colossal was the subsequent scandal that the metropolitan commissioner, Sir William Horwood, had to resign. A nightclub owner was accused in a sensational court hearing of having used her premises for illegal purposes. And the Countess of Ellesmere charged the gilded youth Stephen Tennant, popular stepson of Lord Gray of Fallodon, and Cecil Beaton's sister Nancy with crashing her society ball at Bridgewater House. The result of this affair was that party crashing became all the rage; and the crashers, known as "Cormorants" because they were always on the wing, were the talk of London.

At the dinner tables of Mayfair, which Wallis now frequented, the conversation hinged on royalty, "in" people, sex, tennis, and horses. Few would dream of discussing slums, mass unemployment, or the rising cost of living. In 1928 Mussolini was the idol of London society. Among his keenest supporters was Winston Churchill, who made a statement in Rome, quoted in the London *Times* on January 21,

1927: "If I had been an Italian, I am sure I should have been wholeheartedly with you from start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism." George Bernard Shaw was among many who agreed; referring to Mussolini's most famous political slaying, he said, in a letter to Friedrich Adler on October 2, 1927, "The murder of Matteotti is no more an argument against Fascism than the murder of St. Thomas à Becket is an argument against feudalism." Almost everyone of influence in London society agreed. In hindsight, infatuation with Mussolini can only seem both dangerous and misguided. Fascism was a repressive system, both fraudulent and incompetent. Mussolini was an empty-headed, posturing, preposterous bully with no visible charm; his entire foreign policy executed by Count Ciano in later years was a denial of the principles of the League of Nations. From beginning to end, the British (and French) policy toward Italy was one of conciliation and concession instead of stern rebuke and reminder. In the event, one can hardly be surprised that thinking people lost faith in those gurus who felt that the Italian system was a valid answer to the evils of communism. In view of Wallis's romantic in-

volvements with Prince Caetani, Count Ciano, and Alberto da Zara, it is easy to see how she was inveigled into a belief in that corrupt and invalid political system, and how she shared her conviction of its merits with the Prince of Wales.

Born while his great-grandmother Queen Victoria was still on the throne, the prince was obsessed with empire; he knew that one day he would be the ruler of one-third of the world and of millions of people for whom the monarch was almost a divinity. His father, King George V, was a remote and regal figure who seldom condescended to visit him and his brothers, Albert, Henry, George, John, and his sister, Mary, in the nursery; the king left the children, according to the custom of the age, to the infrequent attentions of a succession of nannies, of whom very few were not sadistically cruel.

King George treated the three oldest boys very much like cadets on a battleship quarter-deck. As the Prince of Wales later wrote, they were always "on parade." If their sailor suits or tartan suits were even a fraction in disarray, the king reprimanded them with savage anger; if they put their hands in their pockets, those pockets were sewn up. They had to wear the

strangling, stiff Eton collars that cut into their necks like saws. They wore long stockings and buckled shoes; even when they swam, they had to be covered from head to foot. The body, in those times, was an object of shame; except in the bath, it had to be concealed utterly. Sex was only for procreation; women were not supposed to enjoy its pleasures at all.

As a result of the repressions of his boyhood, at an early stage the good-looking prince became a rebel. In time he would revolutionize fashion and release the human male from the constrictions of centuries. He would do away with stiff collars, waistcoats, frock coats, gaiters; he would encourage open shirts, shorts, even walking around stripped down to pants in public.

He was an appealing little boy, golden-haired, slender—the world's Prince Charming. As he grew up, only his youngest surviving brother, George, who was tall and dark whereas he was very short, no more than 5 feet 5, was his equal in looks. Both brothers had a feminine streak: at Oxford, where he was a poor student, the Prince of Wales was linked by gossip with his tutor, Henry Peter Hansell; they were familiarly known as Hansel and Gretel. Queen Mary taught the boys to crochet from

an early age; much was made of this by the critics, though in fact it was a British custom of that period to instruct male members of a family in what today would seem to be a predominantly feminine art or craft.

The Prince of Wales was fond of Austria and Germany; he much regretted the divisions in the royal family that preceded World War I. So did his mother, the German-born Princess of Teck. George V's cousin and godfather, Tsar Nicholas, had been murdered by the Bolsheviks at Ekaterinburg; he never forgot that, and he was committed from the beginning to wiping out communism. Another cousin of his father's, the kaiser, fascinated him; he became very friendly with the kaiser's family, spoke German, and spent much of his youth in Germany. His favorite cousin was the Eton-educated Charles, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who would one day play a sinister role in his life.

In the 1920s the prince undertook his famous empire tours. No royal figure before him or after him covered so much territory or shook so many thousands of hands. His small, slim figure with its golden crown of hair became the world's symbol of the promise of youth.

He was the most sought-after eligible bache-

lor of his age, surpassing even Valentino in the immensity of his popularity among young women of all nations. In January 1923 it was announced on the front page of the *New York Times* that he would marry Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, whose face, under a chaplet of spring flowers, stared prettily out of an ornamental oval next to the announcement. A week later her engagement to his brother Albert was announced; today she is the Queen Mother. The following year Queen Marie of Romania tried to match the prince with her daughter, the Princess Ileana. In 1926 Lady Alexandra Curzon, who would soon marry his equerry Edward "Fruity" Metcalfe, was named as being engaged to him; in fact, she was said to have been enamored of the Duke of Kent. That same year he was linked to the Infanta Beatriz of Spain and in 1928 to Princess Ingrid of Sweden.

Max Beerbohm, artist and aesthete, created a now-quite-forgotten sensation in June 1923; with powers equal to Nostradamus's, he predicted the abdication of fourteen years later. He exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in London a cartoon of the Prince of Wales in 1972, already abdicated from the throne, a wretched old man wed to a gaudy socialite daughter of a

*landlady*. There was a storm of criticism over the exhibit, but Beerbohm refused to withdraw it and later sold it to the actor-manager Sir Gerald du Maurier.

The prince's every movement made headlines; during Wallis's stay in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Peking, the papers were full of him almost every day. His chronic capacity to fall off horses, his love of driving steam trains, and his fondness for the Charleston and the Black Bottom and for New Orleans classic jazz were widely featured.

By the time Wallis came to London, the prince was in his early thirties. He was willful, spoiled, charming, furious when crossed. He was decades ahead of his time in his obsession with fitness, a trim waist, and a well-toned, carefully trained physique. He spent hours fussing over his waistline and did thirty minutes of calisthenics every morning; while everyone around him ate themselves into potbellies with heavy meat, sauces, and puddings, he nibbled lettuce leaves and fruit and ate only one full meal a day. He loved sports and nightclubbing; a typical day in his life would begin with a breakfast of an apple, followed by a brisk game of tennis, a lunch of more fruit, an afternoon of golf or polo, and a dinner of steamed fish or

chicken, and would end with an evening spent at his favorite nightclubs, surrounded by the golden youth of the era and with a pretty, eligible debutante on his arm. One night at his residence, York House, St. James's Palace, Fred and Adele Astaire danced memorably for him and he became their devoted friend; on another evening he and his royal gang carted Paul Whiteman and orchestra off to Lord Curzon's dust-sheeted house and rolled up the carpets to fox-trot until dawn.

The prince had recently been in Paris, where he had been involved in a steamy affair with the notorious Marguerite Laurent, the Princess Fahmy Bey, an exotic beauty who, on the third floor of the Savoy Hotel, on the night of July 9, 1923, at the height of a gothic thunderstorm, had shot and killed her husband, a voluptuous Egyptian, in a fit of jealousy brought on by his apparent interest in another woman. A porter wheeling a luggage cart heard the shots and found Prince Fahmy in silk pajamas bleeding from the mouth. The princess flung the smoking revolver at the dying man's feet and surrendered to the hotel detective. Ably defended by the advocate Sir Edward Marshall Hall, she was acquitted on the ground she had been provoked; inheriting several million, she moved to

the Ritz in Paris, where the Prince of Wales flew his biplane to visit her for many a romantic weekend.

At the same time he was involved, after many years, with Mrs. Freda Dudley Ward, who in 1918, despite the fact that she was married to a Liberal whip of the House of Commons and had two children, allowed herself to enter into a prolonged liaison with the prince. She was introduced to him, oddly enough, by Ernest Simpson's sister, Maud Kerr-Smiley. More gossip again averred that the prince was bisexual and that he had enjoyed a romantic liaison on an empire tour with his celebrated cousin, Louis Mountbatten, while Edwina Mountbatten found consolation with an odd assortment of partners including the famous black nightclub pianist Leslie "Hutch" Hutchinson. Such gossip cannot be substantiated today.

During an Australasian tour in 1920, Lord Louis Mountbatten's recently published diaries reveal, the prince indulged in some odd, infantile, and sexually peculiar games: he rode in a perambulator, disguised in a diaper as a baby; he fought with Rear Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey disguised as a woman. On one occasion, he sat on the head of the handsome Lord Claud

Hamilton of the Grenadier Guards and stripped him naked. At another party, the prince again assumed infant clothes and was rushed at headlong speed around the room in his baby carriage.

On June 10, 1930, in a letter to Dora Carrington, the homosexual author Lytton Strachey would write of a visit to the Tate Gallery:

I went yesterday to see the Duveen room. . . . There was a black-haired tart marching round in india-rubber boots, and longing to be picked up. We both lingered in the strangest manner in front of various masterpieces—wandering from room to room. Then on looking around I saw a more attractive tart—fair-haired this time—bright yellow and thick hair—a pink face—and plenty of vitality. So I transferred my attentions, and began to move in his direction when on looking more closely I observed that it was the Prince of Wales—no doubt at all. . . . I fled—perhaps foolishly—perhaps it might have been the beginning of a really entertaining affair.

This, of course, indicates no more than the feverish imaginings of a brilliant flibbertigib-

bet. Was there anything in all this? The truth probably is that the sexually ambivalent prince at that time had not had an actual homosexual experience; that he was considerably lacking in virility, despite his romantic image in the eyes of millions of women; and that even by the late 1920s he was what the French call a *demivierge*. Uncertain and insecure, he was an unsatisfactory lover, and his homosexual leanings, deeply repressed, were revealed in what became an almost hysterical aversion to anyone homosexual. Nevertheless, gay figures of society continued to weave daydreams around his golden head and slim, perfectly proportioned figure. He was the very stuff of salon gossip when Wallis Spencer began to make her way in London society. Ernest Simpson might not be exciting, but he had entry to at least the middle levels of that society when Wallis, who was tired of wandering, weary of struggle, married him, after a very brief engagement, not out of love but out of apathy. The marriage took place at the Chelsea Registry Office on July 21, 1928.

Her mother, who was suffering from a cancerous condition of the eye, could not make the journey from Washington, and she had already made it clear she didn't approve of Er-

nest, possibly because she had found out that he was Jewish or because his company was beginning to be shaky financially. Not a soul arrived from the United States, not even Corinne or Lelia or Mary Raffray or Consuelo, whose husband Benny had applied for a transfer to Paris. The witnesses were Ernest's father and Maud's son Peter, who apparently disliked Wallis as much as she disliked him. The setting was drab and dirty, and the wedding reception was held not at the elegant Grosvenor House, where most such occasions took place, but at the humdrum Grosvenor Hotel, a somewhat seedy pile situated in the hurly-burly of Victoria Station.

It was an unpromising start to the marriage. But at least the couple left for the Continent in style aboard a handsome new Lagonda touring automobile complete with uniformed chauffeur. Throughout the honeymoon, which began in Paris and continued all over France and Spain, Ernest continued to teach Wallis much about art and architecture. He walked her off her feet combing through galleries and museums and palaces. She tried to seem interested.

Back in London the Simpsons found a house at 12 Upper Berkeley Street. This was a pleas-

ant address, not far from the delights of Hyde Park and Green Park. It was rented to them furnished for twelve months by Margot, Lady Chesham, and with the lease came a cook, maid, butler, and chauffeur. Such was the accepted mode of upper-middle-class life in those long-lost days.

Maud Kerr-Smiley made Wallis feel more or less at home in London, whose climate she hated. Maud gave a series of parties for her and Wallis responded in kind. Wallis voraciously read the many London newspapers, especially following every movement of the Prince of Wales. Although she pretended to herself and others that the British obsession with royal doings was absurd and misguided, the fact is she had a hunger which drove her back again and again to read the "Court Circular," the officially authorized daily account in the *Times* of what the royal family was up to every day of the week. Her health was poor; she suffered from colds; her marriage was uninspiring. She was sad much of the time.

During the fall of 1928 the prince was continuously in the news. He was planning a visit to Egypt and to continental Africa, a trip that would include a safari in Kenya; he appeared in public without a waistcoat, which set a new

trend; he was seen helping a small boy dig worms at the seaside; and he joined the war veterans at Ypres in France for a memorial service at that scene of bloody conflict in World War I. These seemingly trivial matters summed up his interests: his love of empire and his need to preserve the security of the Suez Canal, the channel whereby the trade routes to India were maintained; his informality and love of children and the poor; and his obsession with the horrors of the first World War, which he regarded as futile and stupid and the result of unnecessary conflicts between his grandfather, King Edward VII, and his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. That war had cost England the flower of its youth, and the Prince of Wales, who had been on the front in France, was determined, with all his heart and soul, that such a holocaust of bullet and bomb and gassing should never happen again.

All this Wallis could determine by reading his speeches, particularly the impassioned address at Ypres. She hated war; it had caused her great anguish at Pensacola, and she had never forgotten the death of beloved Dumaresq Spencer in action in France. And then in Canton, China, she had seen firsthand the terror and danger of bloody battles between Commu-

nists and Fascists. She could not fail to sympathize with the Prince of Wales's neutralism from the beginning.

There was another matter which she soon heard about and which did not find its way into even the most garish newspapers. While still entangled with Freda Dudley Ward and the Princess Fahmy, the prince found a new light of love: Thelma, Lady Furness, the twin sister of Gloria Vanderbilt and the younger sister of Wallis's friend Mrs. Benny (Consuelo) Thaw. Thelma had the sultry, dark good looks inherited from a partly Latin ancestry. Her American accent did the rest—the prince was always infatuated by Americans. He met her at a cattle show; he had known, he said, Benny and Consuelo when Benny was a diplomat in Buenos Aires. Thelma moved boldly into Fort Belvedere, the prince's residence on the edge of Windsor Great Park, and redecorated a guest bedroom as her own—in shocking pink, with the Prince of Wales's emblematic three white feathers at the top of each of the four wooden posts of her bed. The prince was greatly amused by this example of vulgarity. They entered into childish games: they bought teddy bears at Harrods and exchanged them as peace offerings after quarrels; they did embroidery to-

gether, an art taught them both by their mothers; and they called each other Poppa and Momma—Momma for the prince. Their sexual relationship appears to have been infantile and unsatisfactory: Thelma later complained to friends that the prince had a very small endowment and was a very poor sexual performer. She spitefully called him, as did so many others, "the Little Man."

Wallis learned that in December 1928 the prince had to return abruptly from his trip to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, because his father was grievously ill; Mussolini, to whom he would always be grateful, supplied transportation. Wallis, by accident or design, caught a glimpse of him one murky afternoon as he left York House, St. James's Palace, in the polished black royal Daimler to go to Buckingham Palace to attend his sick parent. She claims she was on her way to pick up her husband in the City of London when she beheld this sight; in fact, Ernest was always brought home by chauffeur, and the palace was not on the direct route from Upper Grosvenor Street. It is probable, therefore, that like so many fans, she was simply waiting to catch a glimpse of the prince.

By Christmas 1928 the king had rallied, and all London turned out to see the Christmas

attractions: the electric displays in Harrods's windows, the Bertram Mills circus at Olympia, and the hit plays—*Journey's End*, the great R. C. Sherriff drama about the World War I trenches which the Prince of Wales would publicly endorse in March, thus securing a long and successful run; *Chu-Chin-Chow*, an Oriental musical fantasy that would last longer than any show up to its time; *Lilac Time*, a romantic orgy of sentimentality; and the disturbing drama of the supernatural, *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. Not to mention pantomimes—those strange British concoctions involving cross-dressing that Wallis loved.

Life moved on slowly but comfortably for Wallis; Ernest was a considerate, devoted husband. They kept accounts together, and they enjoyed dinner parties and bridge games and backgammon. The only shadow on her life was the illness of her unhappy mother, who, Aunt Bessie wrote, had aged badly and was already an old woman in her fifties. In early 1929 Wallis and Ernest sailed to America on the *Mauretania* to visit with Alice. They were shocked by her appearance. They returned for a chauffeured tour of England, but the pain and sorrow remained.

The lease ran out on the Upper Berkeley

Street house after a year, and Lady Chesham, who was reconciled with her husband, a captain in the Royal Hussars, from whom she had been separated, wanted the house back. Wallis and Ernest moved into a temporary flat in Hartford Street, and were house-hunting when news came from Washington that Alice was dying.

Wallis traveled alone on the *Olympic*. With her usual timing, she arrived in the midst of the Wall Street crash. The news was received aboard ship, and it was impossible to sell her shares in time. She lost almost all her \$15,000 from the Warfield estate; her caveat under the name of Josephine Warfield was not heard until the following year, when it failed.\*

It took only a day or two to learn that most of Ernest's American holdings had also been wiped out. It was a grievous week, and Alice's death on November 2 was the ultimate blow. Alice left nothing; she was intestate. Charles Gordon Allen, her unhappy husband, was also penniless, his meager savings wiped out by the crash. Wallis sailed back to England under a heavy cloud.

Fortunately, Simpson, Spence and Young

\* But she was offered and accepted an alternative settlement.

did not depend on America; the company continued to buy and sell ships at a profit in Germany, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. The Simpsons managed to scrape up enough money to buy some furniture, and Wallis and Ernest located a fine apartment at 5 Bryanston Court, on George Street; it was spacious and comfortable, and it came with a complete staff of servants, who were housed elsewhere on the premises. The flat had a small entrance hall, a large drawing room, a dining room that sat fourteen, three bedrooms—a master bedroom, a second bedroom, and a guest room—two bathrooms, and a large kitchen. Wallis decorated the rooms tastefully, with the exception of the guest room, which she fixed up with a huge round white bed and pink sheets and pillows. Guests entering the drawing room saw to the left an overstuffed brocade armchair and behind it a mahogany table with a Chinese vase brought from Peking; ahead a Chippendale cabinet filled with small Chinese ornaments; also straight ahead a Regency mirror over a conventional fireplace; and to the right a Queen Anne chair with a striped silk seat and a large, silk-covered sofa. Bookshelves built into the wall displayed Ernest's collection of Dickens and A. A. Milne, author of *Winnie the*

*Pooh*, his favorite book, whose central figure he resembled in more ways than one.

Throughout much of the autumn and winter of 1929 the Prince of Wales's activities consisted of stunting in planes, remodeling his houses with Thelma, and planning another trip to Africa, which took place in January 1930. Wallis followed his movements daily: his long voyage to Cape Town through gale-swept seas; his feverish cold; his elephant hunt near Nairobi; and in March a recurrence of malaria. What she did not know was that Thelma Furness, who had taken off with her husband on a separate safari, joined the prince in late February in Kenya. On a lion hunt organized by the governor, Thelma slipped away from Lord Furness after a day of hunting lions and joined the prince's own safari of forty. At night their romance allegedly grew in intensity; she wrote in a book coauthored with her twin sister, Gloria, twenty-eight years later:

This was our Eden and we were alone in it. His arms about me were the only reality; his words of love my only bridge to life. Borne along on the mounting tide of his ardor, I found myself

swept from the accustomed mooring of caution. Each night I felt more completely possessed by our love, carried ever more swiftly into uncharted seas of feeling, content to let the Prince chart the course, heedless of where the voyage would end.

This account scarcely fits with her complaints later on that he was sexually inadequate as a partner; she was probably indulging in fantasy. The prince's onset of malaria was brief; Thelma was on her way back to England when he recovered. He filmed elephants in their native haunts in Uganda, narrowly escaped a charging beast, filmed rhinos in the Congo, and flew to Assuan and Cairo to see the ancient Egyptian monuments. The plane used on his Cairo trip crashed the day after he left it, killing the occupants. He was back in England in April.

In October 1930 Benny and Consuelo Thaw moved from Paris to London, where he became first secretary of the U.S. Embassy. At the same time, and to Wallis's delight, Corinne Mustin Murray also turned up in the city; her husband, George Murray, was assistant naval attaché. Wallis felt much more at home in London now. She became part of an American

colony that tended to meet at least twice a week and exchange news of home.

Through Benny and Consuelo, Wallis met Thelma Furness. Bearing a son, Tony, to Lord Furness made no difference to Thelma's continuing royal liaison, and Furness, who was immensely rich from his Bermuda honeymoon ships despite the crash, was enjoying a continuous honeymoon with beautiful young women in the south of France. As if surrounding the prince on all sides, Thelma spent her weekends at Fort Belvedere while Gloria Vanderbilt, with her daughter, Little Gloria, set up house at the imposing Three Gables, directly opposite Fort Belvedere and watchable from the royal windows.

Even Mama Morgan, Laura Kilpatrick, the sisters' colorful mother, moved into Three Gables to make the siege complete. Meanwhile, inspired by Thelma's American enterprise, the prince redid Fort Belvedere from top to bottom, installing central heating—a great luxury in England—a Turkish bath, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool. The prince would arrive romantically with Thelma at this gothic hideaway by plane, his new King's Flight pilot, Flight Lieutenant Edward Fielden, expertly

touching down on Smith's Lawn at Windsor Great Park.

Wallis became a friend of Thelma's; it is possible she felt that through the connection she would obtain a foothold at court. At all events, the two women met for lunch, usually at the Ritz, and enjoyed the gossip of the hour; when, in mid-January 1931, Consuelo and Benny Thaw invited Wallis to Burrough Court, the Furness house at Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, center of the fashionable fox-hunting country, she accepted at once. The Thaws made an exciting promise: the Prince of Wales and his brother Prince George, who annually attended the Quorn Hunt from their nearby residence of Craven Lodge, were expected to be at the house party. Lord Furness was on safari in Africa at the time.

At the last minute Benny's mother fell ill in Paris and Consuelo flew over to take care of her. Wallis, Ernest, and Benny decided to go up to Melton Mowbray by train. It was well into January and the weather was too foggy for safe driving.

Wallis was nervous about meeting the Prince of Wales. She spent a day at the hairdresser's and beauty parlor. By Saturday she could face herself more or less calmly in mirrors—the Bry-

anston Court flat was full of mirrors. But she was still terrified: that she wouldn't make the right impression; that she would be out of place as she had been in Warrenton, in an environment in which horses and hunting were the main topics of conversation; and that she wouldn't be well enough to dazzle—she was coming down with a miserable winter cold.

At last she was ready. With the long-suffering Ernest, she drove to St. Pancras Station, where they met Benny Thaw for the trip. Wallis felt increasingly unwell on the journey. As the train chugged through fog and drifting snow, she was coughing and sneezing uncontrollably; she was sure she had a fever. She suddenly realized she had no idea how the prince should be addressed. Benny told her the correct form was "Sir." It dawned on her that she didn't know how to curtsey; Benny must teach her at once. In the swaying, rattling, sooty train, Benny Thaw, career diplomat and first secretary to the U.S. Embassy in London, managed a very clumsy curtsey. Wallis felt too awful even to laugh. But she copied Benny, and by the end of the trip she had mastered the art to perfection.

The train steamed into Melton Mowbray in a dense yellow fog. Thelma had sent a car. The

chauffeur had to struggle with painful slowness through the damp and icy murk. At last he stopped in front of a large, gabled house, with an imitation Tudor look: "Stockbrokers' Tudor," as Osbert Lancaster would later dub the architectural mode. Averill Converse, Thelma's stepdaughter by a previous marriage, was at the door instead of the butler to greet the arrivals. Averill told her guests that Thelma had gone over to Craven Lodge to return with the two princes. Wallis could only sneeze and cough miserably as she and Ernest went to their rooms to freshen up.

Averill entertained her guests to a prolonged afternoon tea. The hours ticked away on the grandfather clock; Wallis began to wonder if the princes would ever turn up; if they were marooned somewhere in the fog. Finally, after two hours, at 7 p.m., there was the sound of a car drawing up on the gravel drive, followed by a babble of voices. The butler opened the front door.

# THE PRINCE

Dark, vital, gorgeous, Thelma strolled in with the princes. It was the first time Wallis had seen the Prince of Wales at really close quarters: the faraway figure moving through the crowds at the Hotel del Coronado and the barely glimpsed, sad-faced presence in the royal car leaving St. James's Palace, the personage of the newsreels and the newspapers and the magazines—he was actually saying “Good evening” to her and shaking her hand. She curtseyed. She looked hard at him, with a burning curiosity.

She liked him at once. He was smaller than he seemed in photographs. He looked very fit but was narrow, delicate, and slender in build.

His hair was a shining gold. His eyes were a tired, haunted blue with premature pouches under them, the result, Wallis would later discover, of heavy drinking and insomnia. Almost childlike at a distance, his face was puckered and deeply lined because of too much exposure to the tropical sun on his travels to the limits of the empire. He had even, white teeth, frequently displayed in an infectious quizzical smile that few could resist. He was dressed in a loudly checked tweed suit. He was informal, relaxed and laughing. His face in laughter was open, innocent, and joyous; in repose it was intensely sad, possessed of a secret pain.

Part of that pain was caused by the recurring sexual problems which Thelma Furness would later and quite ruthlessly discuss in international circles.

It was already night. Dinner would be served at nine. To make her royal guests welcome, Thelma prepared a second tea, forcing Wallis, who dieted grimly, to tackle yet another round of scones, cake, and England's favorite beverage. The conversation was desultory. At last, Wallis and Ernest went to their rooms to dress for dinner while Thelma went to the nursery to tuck her baby son, Tony, and his cousin, Little Gloria Vanderbilt, into bed; Gloria Senior was

abroad in France. The conversation at the evening meal offered little inspiration to Wallis: it centered on the hunt, which she continued to dislike, hounds, and the studbook. She felt as bored and alienated as she had been at Warrington. She was still suffering from her cold, and she was a long way down the dining table from the prince.

Feeling only slightly better after sleeping late the next morning, Wallis, still sniffling into her handkerchief, walked downstairs to find the Prince of Wales chatting with his devoted aide, Brigadier General Gerald F. "G" Trotter, a grizzled charmer who had lost his right arm in the Boer War and whose uniform sleeve was pinned to the front of his tunic. Wallis found at the luncheon table that there were no place cards now; boldly, she sat next to the prince. For something to say, he observed, "You must miss central heating, Mrs. Simpson." To which, with startling effrontery, she replied with a falsehood: "To the contrary, Sir, I like the cold houses of Great Britain." Then she added, "I am sorry, Sir, but you have disappointed me." The prince looked understandably startled by this impudence. "In what way, Mrs. Simpson?" he asked. While, no doubt, the expressions of Ernest, Thelma, "G" Trot-

ter, and the other guests were pictures of shock and dismay, there was no stopping Wallis now. She said, "Every American woman who comes to England is asked that same question. I had hoped for something more original from the Prince of Wales!"

Wallis had grasped shrewdly from the first moment she looked into the prince's weak, sensitive, pale-blue eyes that he wanted to be dominated by strong people; he liked to be confronted head-on. Her cool, expert calculation paid off. The prince was unable to shake off her sharp remark; she had caught his interest, and she knew it.

Dinner that night was a large and elaborate occasion. Dozens of the local gentry gathered in the dining room for hours of horsey conversation. The next day Wallis, Ernest, and Benny returned to London. Perhaps because the meeting with the prince awakened thoughts in Wallis she would rather suppress, her behavior over the next few days was nervous and drastic. She fired her chauffeur because of some slighting remark he had made to Ernest; she got rid of a maid and gave notice to the cook. She was consumed with a new ambition: she must meet

the prince again. An ideal occasion would be her presentation at court. When an American acquaintance, Mrs. Reginald Anderson, suggested the presentation, she accepted immediately, even though Mrs. Anderson as a personality left her somewhat cold. Her cousin Lelia Barnett had come to London in the fall of 1929 for such a presentation, and Wallis had helped to dress her. Thelma Furness had been presented; so had Consuelo and Gloria. Wallis would not be left behind.

The conditions of presentation had a moral stringency typical of the reign of King George V, whose high standards of conduct contrasted oddly with the decadent self-indulgence and promiscuity of fashionable London in the 1930s. For years, no divorced woman was received at court. By 1931 a divorcee could be presented, but she had to prove that the fault of adultery, cruelty, or desertion lay with the husband. Any suspicion of collusion would be frowned upon, which narrowed the field considerably.

In order to crawl through this needle-eye of official acceptance, which meant a good deal more to her than she pretended, Wallis anxiously wrote to Mrs. Sterling Larrabee, her former hostess at Warrenton, to obtain the neces-

sary divorce documents from the Warrenton courthouse files. Why she didn't write to her lawyer, Aubrey Weaver, at Front Royal is a mystery, although she often had a poor memory for names. No sooner had she written to Mrs. Larrabee than panic seized her, and she sent a letter to Aunt Bessie expressing her interest in the prince with a cable insisting that nothing be said about the meeting at Melton Mowbray. She was afraid of a leak to the press. Then, unpredictably, after issuing this stern request, she couldn't resist bragging about her encounter. She wrote to Mary Kirk Raffray in New York about it and then impulsively gave Bessie permission to talk to Lelia Barnett, and she told Benny Thaw who told Corinne . . . It was clear she was in a spin of nervous excitement mixed with tension and scarcely knew what she was doing. And yet she claimed in her memoirs that royalty meant nothing to her.

Mrs. Larrabee proved to be a friend and sent the divorce decree to London. But since she was no expert at obtaining documents, she failed to obtain the all-important depositions of Alice, Hugh Spilman, and Wallis herself; Wallis most anxiously sent her back to the courthouse to obtain the depositions and mail them.

Meanwhile, the Prince of Wales and his

brother George had left England, traveling via Paris to Spain and then across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and South America. The journey, taking many weeks, had the double benefit of aiding British trade problems south of Panama and spiriting the star-crossed bisexual George away from a dire situation with a boy in Paris. In the prince's absence Wallis wasted no time in capitalizing on her royal encounter. As word got around that she had met the prince, she received invitation after invitation, dragging with her the exhausted and irritable Ernest, who hated late nights after a hard day's work at the office. Her social ambition was ferocious, obsessive. Among the Simpsons' hosts that spring of 1931 were Lord and Lady Sackville, who invited them to stay at their fabled estate, Knole. At the same time, Wallis began cultivating Thelma much more intensively, clearly realizing how that friendship would bring her very close to the throne. And she also got to know Gloria Vanderbilt, who was spending more time in England, and the colorful Nadeja, known as "Nada," Milford Haven. A glamorous White Russian, Nada Milford Haven shared with Thelma and Gloria membership in a high-powered group of society les-

bians who were the cause of constant hothouse gossip in the Mayfair salons.

On May 15 Thelma threw a grand welcome-home party for the two returned princes at her house in Grosvenor Square. The guests were excited as Thelma walked in, resplendent in a silver gown, with the Prince of Wales. As the prince approached Wallis, he whispered to Thelma, "Haven't I seen that lady before?" Thelma reminded him that he had met Wallis at her house. He shook hands with Wallis as she rose from her curtsey and he told her how much he had enjoyed their previous encounter. She smiled; he continued to pass down the line.

A few days later the lord chamberlain, who had accidentally overlooked the telltale American postage stamps on Win's faked letter from Canton, approved Wallis's presentation at court. Wallis was overjoyed. She could think of nothing else but the big event coming up in June. However, she had a distraction: Mary Raffray, who was separating from Jacques, announced that she would be arriving on the *Mauretania* in a few days. Wallis was far too busy to welcome this visit; the dark side of her nature was in evidence as she fretted about the arrival of her oldest and dearest friend.

Mary had a rough crossing, but she overcame seasickness to carry on elaborate flirtations with several handsome young bachelors aboard. She arrived at the railway station in London with no less than five beaux escorting her, then dropped the lot as she sped off with Wallis through the crowd. Wallis had an invitation to lunch at Consuelo and Benny Thaw's, and there was no way she was going to miss it. Suitcases and all, she whisked the exhausted Mary off to Consuelo's house to meet Thelma and Nada. On the way, she confided that the Thaws' was used by the Prince and Thelma as a love nest.

Mary scarcely had time to powder her nose as she was whirled by high-strung Wallis from tea party to dinner party; they didn't get home to Bryanston Court until well into the early morning hours. Mary fell exhausted onto the ghastly circular guest-room bed with its pink sheets, pink plush covers, and wide satin eiderdown. Wallis spent the next few days in a constant spin with Mary. The occasional dinners at Bryanston Court had an offbeat flavor—Ernest stiffly dressed up in white tie and tails and the two girls in lounging pajamas and robes. Felipe Espil, Wallis's old flame of Washington days, was now first secretary of the Argentinean

Embassy and frequently entertained the Simpsons and Mary.

On Derby Day, June 3, 1931, the sleek U.S. diplomat William Galbraith and his brusque, abrupt wife Katherine took the excited Wallis and her gang to Epsom Downs to see the race from the top of a rented London double-decker bus, supping on champagne, caviar, and cold chicken from picnic hampers. At last the presentation day arrived: Wednesday, June 10. In a state of hysteria, Wallis borrowed Thelma's fan made up of three ostrich feathers, the traditional symbols of the Prince of Wales required of every presentee. She was too tall to fit into Thelma's white dress, so she wore Consuelo's instead. Thelma lent her the train. She bought an aquamarine and crystal necklace cross and a corsage brooch. The wealthy American Lester Grant lent her and Ernest his touring automobile.

The Andersons and the Simpsons left Bryanston Court early to beat the tremendous traffic jam in The Mall. Crowds had already formed and peered into the luxurious interior of the car, trying to see the occupants.

It was the first time Wallis saw Buckingham Palace. She was enthralled. The chauffeur

drove through the iron gates, parking the vehicle in the courtyard. Wallis and her party went to a special entrance, passing through a vestibule where liveried flunkies took the ladies' wraps. From there, the guests walked slowly up the red-carpeted grand staircase that was lined on either side by yeomen of the guard in medieval costumes. They made their way down a chandeliered corridor to the red-and-gold ballroom. Wallis was fascinated by the throne dais. The king and queen were seated side by side in front of the gold-embroidered canopy of crimson velvet, beneath which they had sat at the Coronation Delhi Durbar of 1911. Under the canopy's top were embroidered in gold the royal lion and unicorn, and on either side white-fluted pillars supported a display of noble classical figures.

The king was in full-dress uniform; the queen was in a beaded gown of white satin with a choker necklace of pearls and diamonds. The Prince of Wales stood behind the throne. The indispensable "G" Trotter led Wallis's party to seats near the front. Soon, the room was completely full. At a signal from the conductor of the palace orchestra, the presenters and presentees formed a line passing the

thrones, the ladies curtseying one by one to the royal couple. Later, everyone repaired to the State Apartments, and the Prince joined his parents in talking briefly with the guests. Wallis heard him say to his great uncle, the Duke of Connaught, "Something should be done about the lights. They make all the women look ghastly."

After the presentation Thelma invited Wallis, Ernest, and the Andersons to join her and the prince for a nightcap at her house. Wallis boldly challenged the prince on his remark about the lights. He expressed surprise that his voice had carried so far; he had underestimated the intensity with which she, feigning indifference, was hanging on his every word. Once again, with great cleverness, she had piqued his royal interest.

As the Simpsons left Thelma's house at 3 a.m., their chauffeur was waiting to take them home. But the prince offered to drop them off in his own car. Wallis dismissed her driver. At Bryanston Court she invited the prince to come up for another drink. He declined with a smile; he was on his way to Fort Belvedere. But he indicated that he would certainly take her up on the offer another time.

Soon after this memorable evening, Consuelo Thaw offered the delighted Wallis the chance of a trip to the south of France. The idea was that this would be a party for women only; Benny and Ernest would be left behind, and Gloria Vanderbilt would join the women at the Hotel Miramar in Cannes. Wallis accepted, apparently unaffected by the fact that the entire adventure had sapphic potentialities. Mary Raffray accompanied Wallis part of the way. In Paris, while Wallis and Mary and Ernest Simpson's father were crossing the street, a cab, swinging around the corner too fast, struck Mary head-on and threw her to the ground. Wallis, horrified, hurried to her side. Rushed to Gloria Vanderbilt's apartment by ambulance, Mary, crying hysterically, was then transferred to the American Hospital at Neuilly. Cables flew to and fro; Mary's rich Aunt Minnie, who lived in Paris, offered to take care of her. At last, Wallis felt that Mary was sufficiently recovered and she proceeded to Cannes. Mary returned to New York, her health permanently impaired.

Wallis was embarrassed to find an uncomfortable situation in the south of France. She

discovered that she had to share a room with Consuelo. What that led to is uncertain, but one morning Gloria Vanderbilt's maid, Maria Caillot, strolled into Gloria's room for no particular reason and found Gloria and Nada in negligees enjoying a passionate French kiss. Wallis found that men were totally discouraged by this steamy ménage, and she had to go out hunting for eligible males. When Ernest, who may have had an inkling of what she was getting herself into, summoned her back to London to go to Lord and Lady Sackville's house party, she packed up her things and fled.\*

Back in London, a depressed Wallis found that Ernest's business was in trouble. Her extravagances had drained whatever was left over from Uncle Sol's trustee settlement, and now she had reduced her unhappy husband to such a state of penury that he had to fire the chauffeur and sell the car. Keeping up with the rich tore away at her nerves and made the weekly accounting a torment. Once again, her insistence on late-night parties wore Ernest, who had to be up at eight to go to his office by

\* In a bizarre echo of this curious episode, Wallis years later had a picture of two naked women making love which she displayed in the bedroom of her successive homes in Paris.

underground train, to a frazzle. He began to look haggard and pale, and dark circles formed under his eyes.

In the autumn of 1931 Wallis was feeling terrible. She was ill from inflamed tonsils and had to have them removed. Consuelo came to see her every day; her solicitude seemed to be beyond that called for by normal friendship—her interest in Wallis hadn't waned. Wallis dreaded her visits. It was a grim, foggy November; for weeks Wallis lay in bed, exhausted by the operation, unhappy and unsettled by her penurious condition. Word from the Prince of Wales was a long time forthcoming, but at last her impatience was rewarded. In late January 1932 the winter gloom was lightened by the longed-for invitation to go to Fort Belvedere. The Simpsons drove down in a borrowed car, through snow-covered countryside to Sunningdale, Berkshire, arriving in the early evening. The road cut through forest trees until, at a moment of dramatic unexpectedness, it opened out into a gravel driveway and then to the brightly lit turrets and battlements of the fairytale castle. Lamplight was glowing in the tall windows and a liveried footman appeared at

the sound of the car engine, to open the door and take the luggage. With typical informality the prince, dressed in a kilt, was at the door in person to greet his guests.

He led the again-rejuvenated and happy Wallis with Ernest through an octagonal anteroom with black-and-white marble floors to the elaborate drawing room surrounded by Canalettos. Rich golden-yellow satin curtains were drawn against the night; the atmosphere was cozy, snug, and very American under Thelma's influence. There were chintz-covered armchairs and Chippendale tables and a grand piano. Even though a fire was roaring away cheerfully in the grate, the central heating was on full blast. Thelma was there, along with "G" Trotter and the Thaws. The prince insisted on taking the Simpsons to their room. When they returned after dressing for dinner, they were astonished to see the prince, watched tenderly by Thelma, embroidering with infinite care a backgammon table cover. He said, looking up bashfully, "This is my secret vice. The only one, in any case, I am at pains to conceal."

Dinner took place in the handsome, paneled dining room decorated with pictures of horses by Stubbs. Wallis was very amused to see that

the prince kept his cigarette case in his sporran. After the meal the guests joined their host in games of cards and in trying to piece together a giant jigsaw puzzle. Then they danced cheek to cheek to the latest fox-trots and rhumbas. At last came the moment Wallis was waiting for; the heir to the throne asked her to dance. "I found him a good dancer, deft, light on his feet, with a true sense of rhythm," she wrote years later.

In March 1932 Wallis's old friend from Peking, George Sebastian, issued an invitation to the Simpsons to visit him in his elegant house at Hammamet in Tunisia, North Africa. When Wallis glumly wrote her host that she was without funds, he sent her the tickets. It was a pleasant trip, and George an excellent host. Not long afterward Aunt Bessie arrived, and she treated the Simpsons to a trip around Europe. But despite these adventures, Wallis was still under severe stress; her marriage wasn't working, and the financial problems and a frustrated longing to see more of the Prince of Wales left her again in a poor state of health, suffering from ulcers. As a result, the trip with Aunt Bessie was cut short.

Wallis was also distracted with what became an open scandal that summer; Consuelo

Thaw's affair with a charming foreign woman. In view of Benny's position at the U.S. Embassy, this was not only a torment to that correct and decent man, but it also exposed the embarrassed Wallis to untoward gossip because of Consuelo's consuming interest in her. She began to edge away from Consuelo. And she had still a further problem: in those summer weeks the Prince of Wales found a new female distraction: the celebrated aviatrix Amelia Earhart, who had just made international headlines by being the first woman to cross the Atlantic in a solo flight. Apparently disregarding Thelma, the prince ostentatiously took Amelia dancing; she was married, and once again he seemed to have an unhealthy fascination with married women. He took Amelia to the Derby, causing a flurry of excited comment in the American press; the British newspapers primly avoided any mention of this new romance. The *New York Times* noted that he danced with Amelia at the Derby Ball—again and again and again.

He treated Thelma badly that year; he was looking for new fields to conquer. He traveled to Mussolini's Italy without her, giving crowds the Fascist salute as he arrived in Venice, where he danced repeatedly with a young Hun-

garian beauty and then joined her for a swim at the Lido the following morning. He inspected the Italian and British fleets at Corfu; then he proceeded to Monte Carlo, where on August 25 he was seen repeatedly dancing cheek to cheek with an American girl, Mrs. Barbara Warrick, while young French maids pelted them with flowers from the casino balcony. He continued to Sweden, accompanied now by Prince George, where he publicly flirted with the beautiful Princess Ingrid and where there was much baseless talk of an engagement. After a quick trip through Ireland, where there were threats that he might be blown up by the IRA, he returned to England and flew north to look at the dreadful labor conditions in the Midlands that vexed and disturbed him.

During the prince's long absence abroad, Wallis was increasingly unhappy, frustrated, and distracted at Bryanston Court. She still fought with her staff, hiring and rehiring servants; she continued to be sickly and fretful; her ulcers caused her much pain and discomfort. However, she was consoled by the fact that the prince wasted little time after he returned before inviting her and Ernest to Fort Belvedere. In January 1933 Wallis made an-

other visit to the Fort, but it is clear from her letters that by then she was irritated by Thelma's continuing hold over the prince; she wrote an edgy note to her Aunt Bessie, clearly distracted by the sight of Edward and Thelma embroidering in unison. She didn't realize that the prince very much had his eye on her.

In March 1933 she knew. It was not customary for royal persons to send messages to passengers on ships unless those passengers were already relegated to the role of court favorite. When Wallis sailed that March aboard the *Mauretania* to visit with Aunt Bessie in Washington, a Marconigram was received for her aboard ship, wishing her bon voyage and a safe return. News of the wire rapidly spread around the ship, ensuring for her the maximum attention from officers and crew. She regarded the vacation as an opportunity to escape from her stultifying marriage. She enjoyed the attention of many men, and spent much of her time in Washington carrying on a series of giddy romantic liaisons; she added a new series of beaux on the return voyage. It is clear that it was hard on her to return to a monogamous situation even though dear, dull, devoted Ernest met her when the ship docked at Cherbourg.

After her return Wallis's relationship with the Prince of Wales underwent a change. Evidence for this can be found in an episode involving Henry Flood Robert, the son of Grace Flood Robert, Wallis's old friend from Coronado days, who arrived in London to take part in the International Monetary Conference. Wallis, Ernest, and Grace, who was staying with them, met Henry off the train. Wallis prepared an excellent American meal for the Roberts, including fried chicken. It was an exciting occasion; Wallis was delighted to recall the good old days in southern California. Oddly, Thelma Furness was present on her own, as out of place as Ernest was in a tide of reminiscence that neither could share. Mr. Flood Robert will not forget what took place at four o'clock that afternoon:

Suddenly the door opened and the maid came in. She announced that the royal car was at the door. And that Madam was expected to come at once to Fort Belvedere as the Prince of Wales was waiting for her! Wallis immediately, and right in front of Ernest and Thelma, picked up her coat and handbag without a word

and walked out, leaving us all so stunned we couldn't speak. I looked at Ernest and saw a tear in his eye. I couldn't look at Thelma. My heart went out to Ernest, but I admit I said to Mother as we went to our hotel, "More power to Wallis!"

A certain inscription on a bracelet given by Edward to Wallis three years later, but now in the possession of the Countess of Romamones, indicates that it was not long after that incident that the relationship between Wallis and the prince became a sexual one. The countess will not reveal the exact words of the inscription, which marks a significant anniversary, but says only that it contains a highly intimate reference to "a bathtub." According to a close friend, the relationship between Wallis and the prince was bizarre. He says:

The techniques Wallis discovered in China did not entirely overcome the Prince's extreme lack of virility. It is doubtful whether he and Wallis ever actually had sexual intercourse in the normal sense of the word. However, she did manage to give him relief. He had always been a repressed foot fetishist, and she discovered this and indulged the perversity completely. They

also, at his request, became involved in elaborate erotic games. These included nanny-child scenes: he wore diapers; she was the master. She was dominant, he happily submissive. Thus, through satisfying his needs, needs which he probably did not even express to Mrs. Dudley Ward and Thelma Furness, she earned his everlasting gratitude and knew that he would be dependent on her for a lifetime.

Others differ with this view, among them Alberto da Zara's lieutenant, Giuseppe Pighini, who says:

I was told by close friends of Wallis that indeed she in fact did introduce the Prince to techniques which made it possible for him to have satisfaction during intercourse. He was so emotional that before he would climax too quickly and thus could not consummate sex.

In this case, of course, the art of Fang Chung would be indispensable.

That same year Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany. From the beginning he was determined to secure an alliance with Great Britain,

whose foreign policy was leaning toward his chief rival among European dictators, Mussolini. He embarked upon a policy of interesting the British royal family in re cementing their fractured alliances with their cousins in Germany. With great shrewdness, and in order to secure the support of the army, which maintained its traditional allegiances to the old Junker Prussian class, he did not confiscate the massive properties of Kaiser Wilhelm II, cousin of King George V. Although the kaiser remained in exile at Doorn, the Netherlands, his sons and daughters-in-law were comfortably maintained under the *führer*'s protection in Berlin. Of these, Hitler's favorite was the Crown Princess Cecilie, the tall, buxom, and Wagnerian daughter-in-law of the former monarch. It was at her home, Cecelienhof, a looming gothic folly filled with potted plants and pictures of dead Hohenzollerns, that the young Prince of Wales had spent happy days of his childhood. Her son, Prince Louis Ferdinand, was 25 years old in 1933 and an employee of Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan; Ford was a keen admirer of Hitler, and Hitler had Ford's picture on his desk in the early struggling days of the Nazi party at the Munich Brownhouse. Tall, handsome, dark-skinned, with silky black

hair, Prince Louis Ferdinand was considered by the *führer* an ideal emissary to London. He had a romantic background, calculated to appeal to the Prince of Wales: he had just had a romance with the French movie star Lili Damita, who was soon to marry another of Hitler's idols, Errol Flynn.

Prince Louis Ferdinand was a member of the old guard of the right wing of Germany devoted to the traditions of the army. His host, the entertainingly scurrilous Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, kept a careful diary of Louis Ferdinand's meetings with the Prince of Wales; the German visitor also met Wallis, who liked him. On July 11, 1933, the two young men met at York House, St. James's Palace. They talked partly in German and partly in Spanish. Bruce Lockhart reported in his diary entry of July 12:

The Prince of Wales was quite pro-Hitler and said it was no business of ours to interfere in Germany's internal affairs either re Jews or re anything else, and added the dictators are very popular these days, and that we might want one in England before long.

Bruce Lockhart did not report on Prince Louis Ferdinand's response to this statement.

It should be noted that at the time, due to King George V's uncertain health, Wales was taking his place at some official functions and was expected to succeed him before too long. Perhaps he himself was the dictator he had in mind. Soon afterward, Louis met Prince George, noting, as Bruce Lockhart recorded, "The prince is artistic and effeminate and uses a strong perfume. This appeals to me."

The kaiser appreciated his grandson's visit to the British capital. He wrote to Bruce Lockhart on July 22:

My special thanks to you for your kind efforts in getting the Prince into touch with members of the Royal Family. . . . It would be particularly agreeable if, through this visit, the German-English relationship is furthered. . . . The remark of the Prince of Wales, that we have a right to deal with our affairs as we deem it right, shows sound judgement. Prince Louis Ferdinand would no doubt have agreed with him on this point.

Although Prince Louis Ferdinand was secretly anti-Nazi and later joined the German Resistance, his presence in London as a presumed symbol of Hitler's support of royal alli-

ances ironically influenced the Prince of Wales and, through Wales, Wallis. If anything was needed to convince the Prince of Wales that the *führer*'s intentions were to restore the old family alliances, those doubts were removed. From then on, he and Wallis seldom wavered in their naive belief in Hitler's intentions and desires for a lasting peace. On Armistice Day, November 11, Wales confided in Count Albert Mensdorff, the former Austrian ambassador, telling the count of his fondness for nazism.

Mensdorff wrote:

It is remarkable how he expressed his sympathies for the Nazis of Germany: "Of course it is the only thing to do, we will have to come to it, as we are in great danger from the Communists here, too. . . . I hope and believe we shall never fight a war again, but if so we must be on the winning side, and that will be the German, not the French. . . ." It is . . . interesting and significant that he shows so much sympathy for Germany and the Nazis.

By a juxtaposition of significant quotations it can be seen that the prince's politics, then and later, were coincidental with those of Sir Oswald Mosley, head of the British Union of Fas-

cists. In Mosley's memoirs, while advocating, among other things, that Goering should have come to England to secure widespread support for Nazi Germany, Sir Oswald wrote emphatically:

I was prepared to do anything to prevent a war by maintaining good relations between English and Germans, provided it was compatible with my duty to my own country. [We should have let] the Germans go to a possible clash with Russia, which, if it happened, would have smashed world Communism [in the 1930s], pointed Germany in the opposite direction to us, and kept its vital energies busy for at least a generation while we had time to take any precautions which might prove necessary.

In an article in the *New York Daily News* of December 13, 1966, the then Duke of Windsor wrote:

My Hanoverian and Coburg forebears were German. There was much in the German character that I admired. At their best as, alas, at their worst, they are a virile, hard-working, efficient nation. I acknowledge now that along with too many other well-meaning people, I let

my admiration for the good side of the German character dim what was being done to it by the bad. I thought that the rest of us would be fence-sitters while the Nazis and the Reds slogged it out . . . the immediate task . . . was to prevent another conflict between Germany and the West that would bring down our civilization.

Wallis agreed with these attitudes of Mosley and the prince from the beginning.

In December, Thelma Furness made what for her would be a fatal decision. She returned to the United States to join her twin, Gloria, who was much vexed by conflicts with the Vanderbilt family, for an escapist trip to Hollywood to visit their old friend, Constance Bennett, who was starring in a film entitled *The Affairs of Cellini*. Thelma had enjoyed an abortive if steamy career as a movie actress in the silent period and had once had an affair with Constance Bennett's father. Wallis took Thelma to a farewell lunch at the Ritz. Referring to the Prince of Wales with a rather questionable degree of concern under the circumstances, Wallis said, "Oh, Thelma, the Little Man is going

to be so lonely." To which, improbably, and perhaps innocently, Thelma replied, "Well, dear, look after him while I'm away. See that he doesn't get into any mischief." Thelma wasn't being naive and absurdly trusting; she was blinded by her colossal ego and infatuated by her own unlimited power to hold the prince from any distance. She didn't realize, apparently, that he had been getting up to some mischief with Wallis already.

Thelma sailed to New York in a dream state, in a first-class suite brimming with hothouse flowers from Fort Belvedere. The prince was petulant and irritable that she should have chosen to leave him, even for a few weeks, thus disobeying his royal command. The day after she sailed, he called the Simpsons and invited them to a dinner party at the Dorchester Hotel in honor of a local representative of NBC, his old friend Fred Bate. The prince carried on all through the meal about the working-class people of the Midlands, their unemployment problems, their courage, and their misery. Wallis seized her opportunity. Although she lived in a world in which the matter of men on the dole and the breadline meant little or nothing to her, she pretended that she was touched by the prince's stories of hardship. She hung on his

every word. When he went on to discuss his role in the future of the British Empire, she provided expert flattery. He wrote in his memoirs that by the time dinner was over, he was convinced that she was a woman with a social conscience.

Still fretting over Thelma's absence, apparently not satisfied by whatever brief encounters he could manage with Wallis alone, the prince became a man obsessed. He called the Simpsons at all hours of the day and night, as late as 4 a.m., just to talk; always an insomniac, tortured by his own private complexes and by the frustrations of his royal impulses, hating to be left alone even for a moment, he would turn up at Bryanston Court without warning, and Wallis would have to wake up her staff, housed in another part of the building, to satisfy his whims. He drove poor Ernest, whose days were spent trying to deal with the matters of a crumbling business, to a state now bordering on nervous breakdown.

Wallis decided to make the best of this uncomfortable situation. By now the Prince of Wales was utterly dependent on her; she held the upper hand. She knew how to make him laugh, and no matter what hour of the night he turned up, she would regale him with witty,

risqué stories and observations. Sometimes he would accompany her and Ernest to such popular resorts of London nightlife as the Embassy Club. There, in the overcrowded cellar room favored by high society, with everyone in evening clothes clustered at packed tables around the tiny dance floor, the genial host Luigi in attendance, and the glittering Ambrose band playing the latest quicksteps and fox-trots, the prince and Wallis would engage each other in high-pitched, raucous conversation while Ernest sat exhausted and befuddled, in cigarette smoke thick as fog.

By December 1933 Ernest was greatly distressed. His frustration and stress emerged in a breakout of boils that had to be painfully lanced. While he was ailing, Wallis was preparing popovers for the prince in her kitchen.

Just before Christmas Wallis dragged herself from her sickbed, where she had been lying with a cold, because of an irresistible invitation: Consuelo had arranged another party for her and the prince.

In mid-March 1934 Thelma Furness was at a soirée given at the Pierre Hotel in New York by her friend, socialite Mrs. Frank Vance Storres.

At dinner the hostess shrewdly placed Thelma next to the 23-year-old Prince Aly Khan, heir to the immense fortune of his father, the Indian potentate, Aga Khan. Aly was the ultimate lady-killer of the day. Lithe, muscular, dusky skinned, handsome, he was an Apollo whose life was polo ponies, fast cars, and beautiful women. His reputation as a lover was second to none in society. Only Porfirio Rubirosa, the Dominican playboy, could match his boudoir reputation in later years. His father had sent him to Cairo at the age of 18 to be trained by the madams of the great bordellos in the art of Imsak, the art of withholding climax and the Egyptian equivalent of Fang-Chung. A night with Aly Khan was like winning the Irish Sweepstakes. Later, a journalist commented that, like Santa Claus or Father Christmas, Aly Khan only came once a year.

He was instantly attracted to Thelma. He liked dark, smoldering, vaguely Latin women, and she looked her best that night. Right at the table in front of her escort, he suggested they go off together the moment they were past the coffee stage. She told him she had to pack that night because she was sailing in two days for England. He gave her a burning glance, peering into the depths of her soul, and said, "Put

your trip off for a week." She was no fool; she said she would be sailing on schedule. He wasn't to be stopped. He asked her what she was doing the following night. She suggested he call her late the next morning.

She was wakened at her townhouse by a messenger bringing in a enormous bouquet of red roses with a note in a distinctive handwriting that read, "Call you at 11:30 a.m. for our dinner tonight. Prince Aly Khan." He did call; and she couldn't resist it: she had dinner with him. The next day, she sailed. When she got to her veranda-deck suite on the *Bremen*, it was filled with roses from one end to the other and Aly had scribbled on cards for each bouquet.

The next morning, when she woke up, the *Bremen* was at sea. The phone rang. It was Aly, presumably calling from New York. He suggested lunch. She laughed at this absurd idea. How about in Palm Beach? To her astonishment, he replied, "I'm on board." And he was. After that, how could she resist him?

On the crossing she had ample opportunity to learn the difference between an ardent but sexually insecure and childish Prince of Wales and a copper-skinned bedroom bombshell with an anatomical chart of the female body stored

carefully in his pretty head. Thelma arrived in London looking ten years younger.

The prince had spies everywhere, and evidently some of them were on board the *Bremen* because Thelma was in trouble from the moment she landed in England. In her reckless vanity, glowing from her lover's attentions, she had apparently forgotten that royalty does not brook disobedience or infidelity. The Prince of Wales turned up at her house in London and insisted she explain herself. How could she betray him with an Indian?

It is clear that all the prince's colonial racist snobbery was aroused along with his wounded pride. The fact that he was already conducting an affair with Wallis didn't seem to strike him as in the least contradictory. Aly wisely moved on to Paris. Then Thelma, in her blindness, foolishly called Wallis and asked, on the verge of tears, for some womanly advice.

It was Wallis's moment of power, and she seized it with relish. As Thelma swept into 5 Bryanston Court, dramatically pale and tense as only she could be, Wallis told her maid to leave them alone and on no account to disturb them, no matter what the emergency. Thelma

poured out her story: Aly Khan, the Prince of Wales's displeasure, her distress at his verbal punishment of her. Wallis, with expert, finely judged calculation, said, "But Thelma, the Little Man loves you so very much. The Little Man was lost without you."

At that moment, the maid walked in. Wallis glared at her furiously. "I thought I told you I was not to be disturbed," she said, with a jagged edge to her voice. The maid replied, "I know, Madam, but it's . . . His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales!" Thelma looked as though the Tower of London had fallen on her head. Wallis went to the telephone without a word.

Thelma strained her ears to listen. All she could hear was Wallis saying, in a tight, tense voice, "Thelma is here." Then Wallis returned. Thelma could see from Wallis's face that nothing further would be said about the call. Chilled and depressed, and realizing that her reign was coming rapidly to an end, Thelma left soon afterward.

The next weekend the Prince invited the Simpsons to Fort Belvedere. It was an agonizing two days for Thelma. The prince was cold to her and scarcely listened to a word she said. By contrast, and right in front of Ernest, he

was deeply and affectionately attentive to Wallis, who treated him rather the way that a nanny would treat a spoiled child. The worst happened at dinner that night. The prince picked up a lettuce leaf with his fingers to nibble it. Wallis slapped his hand and told him brusquely to use a knife and fork in the future. He smiled sheepishly and blushed like a schoolboy. Thelma looked at Wallis, who answered her gaze with an icy, triumphant stare. Wallis was reveling in her victory; that cold, haughty glance told Thelma she was finished. Lady Furness understandably took to her bed. The prince poked his nose through the door later that night. She whispered from her pillow, "Darling, is it Wallis?" "Don't be silly," he snapped. But he didn't return that night.

Meanwhile, Wallis, no doubt to the dismay of the Fort Belvedere chef, whose kitchen prerogatives were absolute, had actually invaded his sacred domain. When the prince, looking for her, at last located her there, she presented him with a plate of eggs she had scrambled herself. He sat down at the kitchen table in front of the cook and maids and ate the eggs on the spot. Thelma left at dawn.

After that, Wallis unhesitatingly left Ernest behind on many dates with her royal paramour.

Syrie Maugham, wife of Somerset Maugham, who had helped Wallis redecorate Bryanston Court, gave a party to which the prince and Wallis were invited. Very late in the evening, they repaired to the library for a romantic encounter. They were startled by the sound of voices raised in the corridor outside. "Where's David?!"\* a voice shrilly demanded. It was Thelma, insisting on seeing the prince. "I'll find him for you," Wallis heard Syrie Maugham reply. But at that moment Thelma flung open the library door and saw the heir to the throne and his American mistress locked in an embrace. Furious, she stormed out, to find consolation with Aly Khan in the south of France.

Early in 1934 Wallis's star rose rapidly. She was pleased to be the rage of London society as the prince's reigning lady, and not a soul believed the carefully arranged fiction that their relationship was platonic (although it now appears that they still were merely involved in sexual game playing and had not enjoyed conventional sexual intercourse). Suddenly, all of Wallis's financial worries disappeared; backed now by substantial sums from the royal purse,

\*The Prince of Wales's nickname.

she and Ernest could afford everything they wanted, though she shrewdly cried poor in letters to Aunt Bessie. Humble, quiet Ernest was apparently quite prepared to continue with this arrangement. He seemed almost to be honored by the imperial bounty that descended upon his wife. There is not even evidence that he found consolation with a mistress of his own. Somewhere between a sheep and a saint, this foolish, fond American royalist simply got on with his daily business. It was typical of that era and place that a husband would accept the fact that he and his wife would go separate ways. Society seemed to regard marriages as a mere convenience, a conventional front covering any manner of untoward behavior. Yet Simpson's reaction seems abnormal: he was in love with Wallis, and the reaction of any man would normally have been an excess of jealousy and hatred followed by a demand that the marriage end. The situation seemed to suggest that his relationship with Wallis was essentially sadomasochistic, just as her relationship with the prince would in many ways be.

At all events, Wallis was ecstatic at being swept into levels of society she could only dream of before. Of those who now received her, the homosexual millionaire Sir Philip Sas-

soon was among the richest. His cousin, Sir Victor Sassoon, had owned the Palace Hotel in Shanghai where Wallis had danced and dined, and she had seen Sir Victor at the Eiwo Race-track there. A dandy with fine-drawn, pallid good looks, dark hair, and a tall, narrow, delicate figure, Philip was a male beauty who reminded many of Dorian Gray in Oscar Wilde's notorious story. Wallis and the prince often enjoyed rendezvous at Sassoon's sumptuous apartments at 25 Park Lane, complete with Lalique chandeliers, eighteenth-century antiques, and rococo wall panelings imported from a Venetian palace. Sir Philip's dinner parties, at which Wallis was often present, were among the most glittering in London. The marble-topped dining table, seating thirty, was lit by a Venetian candelabra and crowded from one end to the other with Venetian crystal bowls brimming with white chrysanthemums.

Sassoon owned a fleet of ten Rolls Royces, a private squadron of planes, and, at his 1000-acre estate, Trent Park, a major collection of the works of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The estate, at Cockfosters, had been given by King George III to his doctor after a gout cure and was once the haunt of highwaymen. At weekends Sassoon, who was under sec-

retary of air, often flew one of his planes to Fort Belvedere to bring gifts of dogs or flowers to the prince and Wallis.

Another of Wallis's new friends was the remarkable Laura Corrigan. Of impoverished origins, she was born plain Laura May Whitrock in Waupaca, Wisconsin. She climbed from waitress and telephone operator to newspaper reporter. She married the house doctor at Chicago's Hotel Blackstone. In 1913 she met the immensely rich steel heir James Corrigan, who bought off her husband, fixed a quick divorce, married Laura, and gave her a Rolls Royce for a wedding present. Her husband conveniently died, leaving Laura close to a million dollars a year. Her dream was to be a queen of London society. She rented the Mayfair townhouse of Mrs. George Keppel, former mistress of King Edward VII, and paid a large amount for Mrs. Keppel's society guest list. She sent out gilt-edged invitations to which no one responded. She tried again. The next time, she offered, in discreetly small italic letters, special gifts to everyone who responded. As a result, society came in full force to her house.

Her guests were not disappointed. Inside each carefully folded Irish-linen napkin she had placed Cartier watches, diamond rings, and

bracelets for the ladies and gold matchbox covers, cigar cutters, and engraved cigarette cases for the men. Overnight, her extravagant party favors bought London. Her raffle prizes were even bigger. Inevitably, she captured the prince and Wallis, both of whom received gifts appropriate to their station. Wallis adored her. For years after Laura died, Wallis told stories about this fabulous upstart who had so much in common with herself. Laura had a collection of wigs, bought to disguise her absolute baldness, each one garishly colored and kept in an enormous leather hatbox known to society as Laura's wigwam. On one occasion, at a swimming pool party, she lost her favorite red wig in the water and went down for it. When she didn't come up for some time, someone called out, "It isn't worth drowning for, Laura!" She surfaced, bald as a billiard ball, triumphantly holding up her wig. Her ignorance was fabulous. When she returned from Europe, she was asked if she liked the Dardanelles. "Loved him, hated her," she said.

Another of Wallis's new-found hostess friends and supporters was the celebrated Lady Colefax. Tiny, dark, and plump, Sibyl was a brilliant patroness of the arts, at whose dinner parties the young John Gielgud, Cecil B.

DeMille, and Osbert and Edith Sitwell could easily be met. Bernard Shaw, Arnold Bennett, Somerset Maugham, and Max Beerbohm were frequently at her exquisite Georgian house in Chelsea, with its eighteenth-century furniture and green-and-yellow silk hangings. Wallis always looked forward to walking through Sibyl's tiny, walled garden with its blaze of cultivated flowers to the French-windowed living room with its air of skillfully acquired culture: the beginnings of taste.

No less prominent a hostess was Lady Cunard, yet another American arriviste who had managed to climb to the top from humble San Francisco origins. Emerald had married Sir Bache Cunard, heir to the Cunard steamship line, and had conveniently shunted her aging husband off to his country estate while she queened it in London. Small and birdlike, with dyed canary-yellow hair, enormous spots of rouge on each cheek, and Cupid's-bow painted lips, she talked in an antic, twittering voice and never sat still, darting all over the room as she provoked her guests with audacious and risqué remarks. Her lover was the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, and she was the chief patroness of Covent Garden, with its resident ballet and opera companies. Her passions were

Hitler, Shakespeare, and Balzac, not necessarily in that order. She hated her daughter Nancy, who was left wing and had an erotic interest in blacks.

Emerald's parties at her house at 7 Grosvenor Square were the focuses of growing Nazi influences in London. Her drawing room, glowing with Marie Laurencin paintings, was alive, night after night, with excited conversation about the merits and demerits of Mussolini, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, and the new *führer*. The conversation would eddy and flow, as Emerald, twittering and extravagant on her tiny feet, bedecked in gold lamé, would lead Wallis, the prince, Ernest, and all her other guests to the dining room, where dinner was normally served at nine. At the center of this elaborate salon was her famous circular table, made of lapis lazuli, with an epergne of statues of nude boys and girls emerging from its center. Sometimes, Emerald would invite her crowd to a summer party at her country estate. No one would forget the sight of her then, because she was addicted to a pomade that irresistibly attracted insects. She would be seen waving an ineffectual hand as butterflies, dragonflies, bees, and wasps spun in dizzying circles around her head.

It was Emerald who, wittingly or unwittingly, began to embroil Wallis in Nazi connections that would dog Wallis for many years. One of Emerald's leading protégés, and her personal court favorite, was the ebullient White Russian Gabriel Wolkoff, brother of the late Czar Nicholas's admiral of the fleet. Gabriel, or "Gaby," as he was known, was the chief set designer at Covent Garden, specializing in particular in the Wagner operas which Hitler loved and which Sir Thomas Beecham also favored.

Admiral of the Fleet Wolkoff owned a humble London tea shop. He was the center of a group of rabidly anti-Semitic, intensely pro-Hitler White Russian refugees and others who were determined to crush the Soviet Union by rallying to the cause anyone and everyone in Britain who might share their point of view. Admiral Wolkoff's daughter, Anna, was a plain but determined young woman who worked as a dressmaker for Princess Marina of Greece. It was at Marina's suggestion that Wallis also engaged Anna. And it was at about that time or soon afterward that Anna became a Nazi agent; by 1940 she would be sending crucial secret intelligence to Italy for use in Berlin.

The association was sufficient to interest the

Secret Intelligence Service. Nor did the SIS fail to note that among the very first individuals to whom the prince introduced Wallis were the ambassadors of Italy and Germany. Count Dino Grandi, the Italian emissary, has stated through his diplomatic associate Egidio Ortona:

I was the first ambassador who asked the Prince and Mrs. Simpson together at my embassy at 4, Grosvenor Square, the purpose being the breaking of the ice which surrounded her. In fact, the dinner was not a smashing success, as a cool attitude prevailed among the guests toward the American lady. My wife, Countess Grandi, even teased me about the whole thing, saying, "You're always up to strange things!" The morning after the dinner, as early as 8:00, we received an enormous bouquet of roses from the Prince with a note of thanks to us.

Soon, the coolness of the Grandi circle disappeared. Grandi confirms that he was invited on several occasions to Fort Belvedere for happy, informal gatherings at which Wallis was present and that both Wallis and the prince were deep admirers of the Italian dictator.

Simultaneously, the prince was determined

that Wallis would be part of the German Fascist circle at the highest levels in London. The Princess Ann-Mari von Bismarck, widow of Prince Otto von Bismarck, the German chargé d'affaires, has written to this author as follows:

I remember how our association began. It was at Ascot. We separated from the crowd in the Royal enclosure. Ambassador Leopold von Hoesch told me he was in a troublesome dilemma. The Prince had asked him if he would arrange a dinner party at the German Embassy for him. Naturally, the Ambassador complied. The Foreign Office in Berlin was content. Then, the Prince asked point-blank if Mrs. Simpson could be added to the list of guests! This was certainly a problem; it was also a royal order. Ambassador von Hoesch told me how worried he was that the German government might find it an unforgivable faux pas to include Mrs. Simpson. Not to speak of the British Foreign Office and the Royal Family of England!

I remember discussing this matter for an hour and a half with the Ambassador, impervious of the people around us. I tried to relax him and suggested he report to Berlin that the Prince had asked him to invite Mrs. Simpson. He did not want to be disloyal to the Prince.

We discussed all possibilities. Finally, I said, "As the dinner is for the Prince, it is important he enjoy it, and if Mrs. Simpson is not asked he will be bored, or, perhaps, not even come at all."

The dinner took place. I do not know whether or not approval was given in Berlin and at Buckingham Palace, but I would assume that the Palace was not approached. I was sitting next to the Prince because since von Hoesch was unmarried I was acting as his hostess. We were at large round tables, and my husband was sitting at the table behind me with Mrs. Simpson. The result was that, while the Prince was talking to me, he kept turning around to look lovingly at Mrs. Simpson and to make sure that she was enjoying herself. The evening was a great success. I loved and admired both the Prince and Wallis. She was extremely witty, and I could see how she amused him.

Von Hoesch was the homosexual bachelor heir to a substantial manufacturing fortune, the polished and genial German ambassador to the Court of St. James. This career diplomat of the von Papen school was typical in criticizing the upstart Hitler in private but at the same time working consistently and deviously to carry out his master's undesirable wishes. He

was lavishly housed at an address in Carlton House Terrace, a property of the Crown that had several years earlier been the home of the ninth Duke of Marlborough. With the help of the Nazi architect and designer Albert Speer, he carefully restored the eighteenth-century decor of the house, engaging specialists to research the correct ambience and buying back, through private purchases or bids at auction rooms, the paintings that had hung on the walls in the early years. His kitchen was among the finest in London; his parties were splendidly organized; his budget from the Foreign Ministry in Berlin was arguably the most lavish accorded to any diplomatic representative. Hitler was determined to secure the devoted interest and admiration of the British aristocracy, and he gave specific instructions that no expense was to be spared in entertaining the cream of British society.

Certainly, the *führer* was concerned that von Hoesch cement the good feelings of the Prince of Wales. According to his diplomatic associate Paul Schwarz, von Hoesch was aware that the prince loved gypsy music more than any other: the melancholy, thrilling strains of the czardas. Von Hoesch hired, at great expense and on

many occasions, the gypsy band of the Hungaria Restaurant to play for Wallis and Edward in small, exclusive soirées at his home. He invited the couple to join him at a reception for Hitler's special adviser in foreign affairs and ambassador without portfolio, the well-tailored and fatuous Joachim von Ribbentrop. Von Ribbentrop was fascinated by Wallis. To mark the first anniversary of their meeting, Schwarz recorded, von Ribbentrop sent seventeen red roses with notes of open admiration every morning, all year round, to Wallis at Bryanston Court. She did not return them. It was widely believed in London that she entertained him frequently at her home, with her Jewish husband present. There was even talk of an affair. Von Ribbentrop represented his master in expressing great fascination for the new royal mistress. Before too long Hitler would be obtaining films of Wallis and running them with ecstatic pleasure at his hunting lodge at Ober-salzburg.

This one-sided romance interested the Secret Intelligence Service. Yet another set of associations proved to be provocative to the anti-Hitler faction in the British Secret Services. The prince's friend Edward ("Fruity") Met-

calfe attended, at the end of May 1934, a Fascist Blackshirt dinner at the Savoy Hotel; dressed to the teeth, he was photographed by the society magazine *The Tatler*.

The guest list included Count and Countess Paul Munster, also close to the prince and Wallis, and at whose castle they would eventually spend their honeymoon. The Fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley and his wife Lady Cynthia (sister of Alexandra Metcalfe) were present; and last, but by no means least, William Joyce, who would one day be a traitor to England as "Lord Haw Haw," the best known of British Nazi broadcasters from Germany in World War II.

At that time the January Club, to which all the aforementioned individuals belonged, was under investigation both by MI5 and the Jewish Defense League. The British Union of Fascists, of which the January Club was both seed-bed and participant, was financed directly by Mussolini; the funds were channeled and laundered via Minculprop, the Ministry of Culture and Propaganda of the Italian government under Wallis's former lover Count Ciano, who by now was Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister. The same organization funded fascist cells in several other countries.

On May 27, the same night as a January Club dinner, the prince and Wallis were at Sibyl Colefax's in the company of the Hungarian film tycoon, Sir Alexander Korda; Merle Oberon; Lord Dalkeith (later the Duke of Buccleuch); and another of Wallis's new friends, the interior decorator Elsie Mendl, and her husband, Sir Charles. Two of those present, Korda and Elsie Mendl's husband, were working for the Secret Intelligence Service and noted the fact that at the party the Prince of Wales expressed his keenest admiration for Nazi Germany. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart and the vivid diarist Henry "Chips" Channon, an American snob obsessed with the rich and titled, did not fail to note Wallis's choice of friends or her royal consort's frequent verbal indulgences in pro-Hitlerism.

One of Wallis's strongest friendships at that time was with Lady Mendl. Wallis adored this stylish, witty, irresistibly charming blue-haired doyenne of interior decoration. Elsie Mendl influenced Wallis considerably in her upward climb. When Wallis first came to London, probably because of insecurity, she was a somewhat strident, harsh, high-pitched presence on

the scene, as the shrewdly perceptive Cecil Beaton noted in his diary. Lady Mendl taught her to tone down her personality to suit British requirements. She encouraged her to speak in a softer, more southern drawl instead of in harsh accents and to dress very simply, to accentuate the angular lines of her figure rather than striving to work against her physical deficiencies. Wallis's severe, classical clothes became her trademark and emblem.

Whereas dresses in the mid-1930s tended to be fussy and exaggerated, Wallis made sure hers were subdued and reserved, in pastel colors or in plain blacks and whites. Even her hats were restrained. Lady Mendl replaced Syrie Maugham's white-on-white designs at Bryanston Court with her own subtle and various color schemes. She taught Wallis how to entertain and how to present her meals, explicitly forbidding soup; her motto was, "Never build a meal on a lake." Soon Bryanston Court, aided by the royal purse, lost its slightly Early Pullman look and became a riot of spectacular effects, indicative of Lady Mendl's capacity to go to the very edge of overdecoration and then stop short. And of course the friendship provided an opportunity for Sir Charles to keep an eye on Wallis's activities and associations.

Pressing on with fierce ambition, Wallis further asserted her power in the summer of 1934. Having disposed of Thelma Furness, she now proceeded ruthlessly to make sure that nothing more was heard from Mrs. Freda Dudley Ward. The prince had not officially disconnected his relationship with Mrs. Dudley Ward. Freda's daughter, Penelope, later the wife of the movie director Carol Reed, and rumored falsely to be the child of the Prince of Wales, fell ill. Freda hoped for some word from York House or Fort Belvedere, some expression of concern or even interest. There was none. At last, Penelope rallied, and Freda called York House to inform her ex-lover that the danger was past. The switchboard operator informed her that orders had been received not to put her through. She never spoke to the Prince of Wales again.

Wallis concentrated grimly on the servants. Members of the royal staff enjoyed certain privileges that had remained unchanged from generation to generation. They tended to set the rules of the various households, instruct the lower levels of the help, and delegate duties right down the line to the lowliest levels of the kitchen and the cellars. Of these, Osborne, the major domo of the Fort Belvedere household,

was preeminent. He had been the prince's batman in World War I, and from there he had gone on to assume his position, which was considered unassailable, absolute, and final. To his horror, he, who took orders only from royalty, was informed by the Prince of Wales that henceforth he would receive his instructions from Mrs. Simpson, an American commoner. This was insupportable. However, unless he wanted to be dismissed, Osborne had no alternative but to accept this galling humiliation. Wallis instructed him to undertake all the flower arrangements at the fort himself, instead of delegating this unmASCULINE task to the maids. This was a complete break with tradition. She drew up the menus for each day of the week, even though she was present at the fort only on weekends. This task had always been the prerogative of the housekeeper and Osborne, working in collaboration. Not content with the decor that had been decreed by the Prince of Wales and Prince George, Wallis and Lady Mendl invaded room after room, pulling up carpets, taking down curtains, storing furniture. Then they redid the fort from top to bottom, oddly enough retaining only one room as it had been before: Thelma's pink folly of a bedroom, with its absurd bed decorated

with the Prince of Wales's feathers on each post.

Wallis clashed furiously with Finch, the butler at York House. This formidable personage had played a leading role in the Prince of Wales's childhood. He had been the prince's valet from the earliest times. He saw himself as a combination nurse and surrogate father, persuading the prince repeatedly to cut down on his drinking, late nights, wild parties, and loose women. This impeccable, upright north countryman, the very epitome of gritty rectitude, found himself being bossed by a foreign woman with little regard for his finer feelings. She not only took over everything at York House, even down to ordering over a hundred gifts for Christmas, but also insisted that Finch learn to mix, serve, and put ice in drinks in the American manner; the very presence of ice in a glass was anathema to the old family retainer. When Finch refused to obey instructions, he was fired. His successor, Crisp, also failed to last. Osborne hung on, but only by a thread.

The staffs of the two households favored by the prince grew to hate Wallis for her busybody interference. They dreaded the return of their master and his mistress at three or four in the morning from the Embassy Club, the Kit Kat,

or other nightclubs, laughing loudly, calling up maids and butler and cook to get out of bed and prepare a snack or otherwise attend to their imperious needs. King George V and Queen Mary were punctilious in their relationship with their staffs. They attended meals at the same time every day, and the matter of instruction to the various levels of help was always adhered to. Wallis and the Prince of Wales rode roughshod over such arrangements. Wallis was punctual, and irritated by the prince's lax attitude toward appointments and mealtimes, but she seemed to have no understanding or consideration when it came to the employees' reaction to his unreliability.

That summer of 1934 the prince decided to flout convention to the limit and invite Wallis on a trip to Spain and France that was sure to attract attention from the press. Not in the British press; royal persons in those days could always rely upon the utmost discretion in Fleet Street. But the American reporters in particular could not fail to note his expedition with an American married woman; he seemed to care little about this, nor about the fact that Ernest Simpson would not be included in the royal party. The inclusion of Aunt Bessie Merryman in the vacation group was a sop to critics. She

would supposedly be a chaperone, but few were deceived.

The prince rented a house, the Castel Meretmont, outside Biarritz, the fashionable resort in southwestern France. Piloted by Flight Lieutenant Edward Fielden, Wales arrived at Le Bourget in Paris at 5:30 p.m. on August 1, 1934; he was accompanied by his equerry, the Hon. John Aird. Wallis, as always afraid of flying, proceeded in a good humor with Aunt Bessie, "G" Trotter, and the rest of the party by boat train across the English Channel. The prince joined them for the train ride to Biarritz. The Castel Meretmont proved to be spacious and comfortable, and after the first day reporters politely withdrew to the edge of the grounds, content to watch the movements of the royal party through field glasses.

On August 5 Wallis and the prince were enjoying a drink at a swimming pool bar on the Biarritz oceanfront when a boy of ten began screaming from the deep end that he was drowning. The prince flung off his jacket, dived in, and rescued the boy, to general applause and the mother's tearful thanks. The news spread rapidly, and the press swarmed in as the prince and Wallis left the bar. Wales was furious, shouting that the story was "lies, all lies,"

and pushing his way to the royal car. It was clear he was embarrassed because of Wallis's presence; he was terrified they would be photographed together. They were.

When the story appeared all over the world the next morning, the French government elected to give the prince the Lifesaving Medal. He refused it. He and Wallis went into seclusion for a week at the Castel Meretmont. Then, on August 15, they went out in wind-driven rain to dine with the celebrated Marquis and Marquise de Portago at the opulent Villa Pelican. At the party the prince told Wallis and the others he was weary of Biarritz and would fly to Cannes to join Prince George, who was now engaged to Princess Marina of Greece, and would be stopping briefly in that resort. George and Marina had been in Vienna, visiting the leaders of the Austrian government. On cabled instructions Edward Fielden flew the royal aircraft from London, in stages, to pick up the royal party. However, it is probable that Wallis's hatred of flying influenced what the Prince decided to do next.

He would now make his way to Cannes by sea. It says much for his dedication to Wallis that he would rather miss his own brother and future sister-in-law—by sailing instead of flying

—than make her uncomfortable by taking the short air trip across Spain to France. He decided to obtain a vessel in Biarritz and charter it for a voyage around Gibraltar. He planned to arrive at Cannes in time to fly to Marseilles, where he would say farewell to his brother Prince Henry, later the Duke of Gloucester, who was on his way, aboard the HMS *Sussex*, to Australia and New Zealand. The only ship available was the ancient, battered, 700-ton oceangoing steamer *Rosaura*, which after thirty years of doing service as an English Channel steamer, struggling gamely through the choppy seas between Newhaven and Dieppe, had been bought by Lord Moyne, an explorer and ethnographer, as a scientific exploration vessel used mainly in the south seas. The steamer was temporarily laid up in Biarritz harbor for refueling, provisioning and repairs.

The prince asked Lord Moyne if he might charter the *Rosaura*. Moyne felt unable to decline the royal request. However, he issued a warning that the weather conditions for the voyage were extremely unfavorable. The Bay of Biscay was notorious for its violent storms, one of which was blowing up at that precise moment. The Prince of Wales refused to listen to Lord Moyne's sage advice, and the captain, un-

der Moyne's personal command, set sail on August 26. The moment the vessel butted out into the sound, it was greeted by a tremendous burst of lightning and thunder. For four days and nights Wallis was virtually confined to the cabin in conditions as harrowing as those that greeted her aboard the Chinese tramp steamer *Shuntien*. Not the least of her anxieties was caused by Lord Moyne's pet monkey, which made a nuisance of itself, continuously screeching and darting about. The *Rosaura*, decks awash, put in at Corunna on September 1. The prince and his party made their way ashore, and took a car to Santiago de Compostela to see the sights. They visited the tomb of the British hero Sir John Moore, one of the Prince of Wales's childhood idols, and lit candles for him in the church. The next day they traveled on to Vigo and thence, accompanied by the local Portuguese and British consuls, proceeded to the border of Portugal. They were greeted by the Portuguese diplomat Pistango Vasconcelles, an old friend of Wallis's from Washington days.

The rain continued for most of the trip, but the royal party drove regardless to Tuy and Oporto to see the famous vineyards. The group lingered on in the region until, on the after-

noon of September 3, a large crowd of local women in traditional costume greeted them at Viana del Castello and presented the startled prince and Wallis with a 2-foot-tall girl's doll in embroidered skirt and blouse.

The prince and his party then sailed via Gibraltar to Majorca, where they motored to the Hotel Formentor on the north side of the island. They swam from the beach, returning at dusk to see the *Rosaura*, lit from stem to stern, anchored in a bend of the bay. The next day they visited the cathedral and cloister of San Francisco; they spent the weekend exploring caves, picking up seashells, and climbing rocks.

The Mediterranean voyage around Gibraltar was rough; at last, the vessel, shipping water, was comfortably moored at Cannes. Somewhere between Portugal and France the relationship between Wallis and the prince had intensified still further, but only on his side. He was by now so deeply in love that he would have been perfectly happy to let the voyage go on forever; ambitious Wallis coolly accepted his madness. Having cabled his brother the Duke of Gloucester to await his arrival at Marseilles, and having instructed Edward Fielden to fly in from Paris to await his pleasure, the prince impetuously decided to stay where he was, with

the woman he loved. He sent Fielden back to London, and his brother sailed to Australia without seeing him.

After having announced to the press via John Aird that he would not be leaving the *Rosaura* in harbor, but would be continuing the voyage immediately, the prince instead advised Lord Moyne that he would be lingering on in Cannes for several days. Then, dogged by newspapermen and photographers at every step of the way, he walked ashore with Wallis at midnight on the eleventh. They were driven by the local British vice-consul, John Taylor, and his wife to the local Palm Beach Club, where they danced one rhumba after another until 4 a.m. The next night they accepted an invitation from Herman and Katherine Rogers for a midnight supper and a swim by moonlight off the chartered yacht of a wealthy couple from St. Louis.

On the third day the prince and Wallis boldly moved into the Hotel Miramar together. At 1 a.m. the prince summoned the night manager to his suite and told him to wake up the staff of the local branch of Cartier and instruct them to go to the shop. He slipped out of the hotel through a back door and made his way to the store, where he bought not only

an emerald-and-diamond charm for Wallis's bracelet but also many other items that he held in reserve for presentation to her later on. He returned to the hotel and got Wallis and the entire party out of their beds, announcing to Lord Moyne that he wished to proceed immediately to sea.

As the vessel moved out into the moonlit ocean, the Prince embraced Wallis and pressed the Cartier charm into the palm of her hand. She was flattered but not moved. The *Rosaura* continued to Nice and Genoa, in calm seas, arriving on September 17. The prince had wired ahead for reservations, and the royal party took a fleet of cars to Lake Como, situated amid the peaks of the Alps. The group stayed at the Hôtel Villa d'Este. The weather was glorious; the white sun burned on the mountains, and the lake water was a dazzling blue. Each morning the prince and Wallis went out in a rowboat on the still water; on the first afternoon they took a speedboat all the way up to Bellagio. Next afternoon they golfed in Monteforno; the day after that they took a long drive on spectacular mountain roads. On September 21 the party motored to Lake Maggiore and took a launch trip from Stresa to the Borromean Islands. There, the prince finally

threw away restraint and allowed himself to be photographed by the press as he walked around naked except for a pair of shorts.

On September 23 the party boarded the *Orient Express* at Domodossola; Mussolini had provided a luxurious private car for the prince and his companions. The prince had cabled Edward Fielden to pick him up in Paris; he was anxious to get home in time to see the RMS *Queen Mary*, the newest of the Cunard ships, go down the slipways for the first time at Clydeside in Scotland. Leaving the others at the Hotel Meurice, in the French capital, he flew to Windsor Castle, landing at Smiths Lawn, on the way to the royal residence at Balmoral. John Aird went with him; Wallis and the others followed on the USS *Manhattan* from Cherbourg. But it seemed that the prince could not tear himself away from Wallis even then. Before he left for the *Queen Mary*'s launching, he turned up at Southampton with gifts and loving words for Wallis and her aunt.

# MOVING TOWARD THE THRONE

In the fall of 1934 Prince George, the Prince of Wales's youngest brother, and the Princess Marina of Greece were at the center of the world's attention. They were to be married on November 29. The royal family was greatly relieved. For years, untoward rumors had circulated about George. Some of these rumors appeared to have a basis in truth. It was stated that he had had a romantic relationship with a black actress, the star of the sensational London revue *Blackbirds*. He was also said to have

been introduced to the use of drugs by a well-known female pianist and by a society woman who would later be mentioned in connection with Lord Erroll, whose murder was commemorated in James Fox's book *White Mischief*. According to the Duchess of Marlborough, one of her husbands, Michael Canfield, who died young, was Prince George's illegitimate son and was handed over to Cass Canfield, head of the American publisher Harper & Brothers, later Harper & Row, who raised the young man.

To this heady scenario were added some even more colorful ingredients. In his diary the incorrigible author Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart mentioned that tales were being told around London of an affair between the prince and a young boy in Paris and that blackmail was involved. According to several sources, Prince George gave the boy magnificent, personally inscribed Tiffany and Cartier cigarette boxes and lighters. The Prince of Wales had to make a disagreeable journey to France to pay money to retrieve these damaging items, but the boy sold the Prince of Wales copies, retaining the originals. There was also talk of an involvement with Noël Coward and with a dark, smoldering youth of Latin origin. Everyone was greatly re-

lied when Prince George put all this folly behind him and fell in love with the exquisitely beautiful Princess Marina of Greece.

Two days before the November 29 marriage, there was a celebration ball at Buckingham Palace. King George and Queen Mary insisted that the lord chamberlain remove Wallis's name from the guest list. This was very upsetting to Wallis, and Edward was furious when he found out; as a result, he arrived with Wallis and swept through the vestibule with her, determined that she would meet his parents.

"He smuggled her into the Palace," King George later said to Count Mensdorff.

Wallis was determined to upstage the beautiful Marina, who was dressed unpretentiously in white satin; the queen was in silver brocade. Most of the ladies were dressed in subdued colors in keeping with the dignity of the occasion. Wallis appeared in a creation of violet-colored lamé with a green sash. While many, including the monarch and his consort, stared at her in cold dismay, Prince Paul, regent of Yugoslavia, made a point of telling her she was the best-dressed woman in the room. Her jewels, presents from her lover, glittered at neck and wrist. She wore a tiara of diamonds, rented from Cartier.

Prince Christopher of Greece wrote in his memoirs:

The Prince of Wales laid a hand on my arm in his impulsive way.

"Christo, come with me. I want you to meet Mrs. Simpson."

"Who is she?"

"An American. She's wonderful."

With sheer effrontery, the prince introduced Wallis to his parents. She curtseyed while they stared at her. She had no warmer a reception from the Duke and Duchess of York, among the most beloved of the younger members of the royal family. The Duchess took an instant dislike to Wallis. She was offended by what she felt to be Wallis's blatant and vulgar behavior and the garish colors of her dress. Wallis was equally unimpressed. She was irritated by the Duchess of York's sweet, slightly high-pitched voice, pink Scottish face, and plump figure. To-day, of course, the Duchess of York is the beloved Queen Mother.

Christmas brought new problems for the royal favorite. She had the audacity to select

the 250 Christmas gifts for the Prince of Wales's staff members herself. Many of the employees were annoyed by this. There was further unfavorable gossip when the prince gave Wallis a diamond pin for Christmas with two square-cut emeralds. He also gave her a cairn puppy that was named Mr. Loo but was as often called Slipper. The prince compounded his various felonies in the eyes of his households by inviting Wallis's personal staff from Bryanston Court to join his own servants around the Christmas tree at York House. It needs no feat of the imagination to envisage the tension on that occasion.

Wearied by the prince's almost constant attentions and obsessive visits and phone calls, much as she wanted to be the prince's lady, Wallis was almost relieved when he spent the season with his family at Sandringham. Then, in January 1935, she made one of her most serious mistakes. She began imitating the Duchess of York with a harsh, mocking style that recalled her burlesques at Oldfields. One afternoon Elizabeth walked into the drawing room at Fort Belvedere and stood frozen. Wallis was performing an aggressive parody of her voice and gestures. Elizabeth stormed out. Wallis was not forgiven.

That same month the Prince of Wales and Prince George, now the Duke of Kent, had an interesting visitor from Berlin. The Baron Wilhelm de Ropp was a peripatetic double agent and emissary of the Nazi theorist Alfred Rosenberg, who, during a visit to London in 1933, had placed a swastika wreath on the cenotaph to the war dead. De Ropp's purpose in being in London was to meet the royal brothers in order to give them a complete picture of the qualities of Hess, Rosenberg, and the other leaders. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart would write in his diary after the meeting that Kent was "strong in the German camp."

The Prince of Wales decided to embark upon another trip to Europe with Wallis and a group of friends. The journey was to be a combined vacation and adventure in politics. That year, the situation on the Continent was exceedingly delicate. The British Foreign Office had embarked upon a policy, emanating from the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, seeming to appease both Hitler and Mussolini in their territorial ambitions in order to secure for the future the British balance of power in western Europe and the defeat of communism. It was desired by the Foreign Office that at all costs Mussolini and Hitler must be kept apart,

discouraged from a full-scale alliance which could imperil British hegemony. Among the British government's urgent concerns was to preserve British power in the Mediterranean and to prevent the blockade or seizure of the Suez Canal, which provided the all-important trade route to and from the British colonies in east Africa and in India, the chief jewel in the crown of the empire. Britain was playing a dangerous game of conciliation with Mussolini, whose activities were increasingly felt to be inimical to British interests and a threat to the British fleet. At the time, Mussolini was taking a position adverse to Hitler because he feared Hitler would upstage him in the European theater. It was felt by both dictators that the possession of Austria, itself a weak, poverty-stricken, and politically flaccid nation, would swing the balance of power definitively in the direction of the country which achieved it. Britain was tending to encourage Italian influence in Vienna because Hitler must at all costs be kept within a certain circumference of power. The game was played in Whitehall for high stakes, and the Prince of Wales, both by assignment and by personal design, became part of that game.

Always an empire man, aware of the impor-

tance of India in the commonwealth, the prince was in his own mind doing his best to execute British foreign policy in making the trip when he did. However, it was not customary or desirable for royal personages to meddle in politics in this manner, no matter how well intentioned the purpose might be. The prince's intent was to encourage the Austrians and their neighbors the Hungarians to maintain as firmly as possible their Italian connection and provide a block against Hitler's advances south. The venture was approved by a friend of his, Sir Oswald Mosley, whose British Union of Fascists was still being financed by Mussolini and Count Ciano via the Italian propaganda ministry. Wallis was a convenient "cover" for this mission to Vienna and Budapest. In view of the fact that the Prince of Wales, by his own admission in his memoirs, turned to her for advice in everything, and that we have it on his own cognizance that she was fully informed politically and read all London newspapers from cover to cover, it is impossible to believe she was not aware of the purpose of the journey. But no proof of her knowledge exists.

The trip began as a holiday. The royal party traveled from Paris on the *Simplon Express* to the skiing resort of Kitzbühel in Austria. The

prince and his companions were supposed to travel through the Augsburg Pass, but an avalanche swept down ahead of them, cutting the rails. Instead, they were transferred to another train, sent by the Austrian government to the town of Wörgl, which took them 100 miles off course. They had to wait several hours in freezing conditions for the train to arrive.

On February 5 they reached Kitzbühel, where a crowd of newspaper correspondents and photographers was waiting. The prince responded in fluent German to the speeches by the mayor and prefect of police. They checked into the Grand Hotel. The swirling snowflakes and leaden skies created a picture of gothic gloom. Fifteen people had been killed in avalanches, and a resort hotel and eight homes had been swept away.

While at Kitzbühel, Wallis and the prince made the acquaintance of a person whom Wallis liked; he was to play an important role in their lives. He was the young, witty, and handsome Dudley Forwood, whose neatly trimmed mustache, sturdy figure, and smart suitings instilled confidence in everyone who met him. He was the junior attaché to Sir Walford Selby, British envoy and minister to Vienna. It was customary to send an attaché or first secretary

in attendance to visiting members of the royal family when they arrived within the borders of a nation. At the Grand, Forwood joined the royal entourage, which included Bruce Ogilvy, the son of Lord Airlie, who disapproved of Wallis; the Colin Buists; and the equerry, Commander Lambe.

On the first morning of his visit, Forwood recalls:

Ogilvy came to me and said, looking at my blue suit, "What are you doing in those clothes? You're supposed to be going to ski with His Royal Highness." I've never put on ski clothes more quickly in my life. Off we went. I was surprised to find that His Royal Highness was not adept at the sport. In fact, I would later determine that he wasn't adept at any sport. He was not skilled at doing anything physical. It is true he had great courage and determination, but he wasn't a golfer, and to tell the truth he was quite laughable at riding to hounds. As for skiing, he was . . . bad at it. Fortunately, I was . . . bad too. Wallis stood on the sidelines in . . . unsuitable high-heeled shoes looking anxiously up at us as we descended the slopes quite perilously. I heard him call out in his strange Cockney voice, "Aren't I doing splendidly, Wallis?" And unfortunately he wasn't.

Everywhere we went, two French women, dressed immaculately, followed us, determined to talk to the Prince. They skied after us down the slopes, pestering him. He was so flustered he skied directly into a snow bank. The French women saw their opportunity and followed him into the snow bank, and there was a scuffle inside it. A series of exclamations in French. The Prince emerged in flight from them, quite bedraggled. I said to him, "Was that the first time Britain was ever raped by France?" He loved it, he walked over to Wallis and said, "Dudley says I've been raped, Wallis!" It was the beginning of a very happy association.

Wallis, after an abortive skiing lesson, stayed in the hotel playing bridge, backgammon, and poker with the others in the royal party, while the prince went out in severe wind and sleet to ski from morning to night.

On February 9 the sun broke through and the sky was a sudden icy blue. That night a radiant Wallis appeared with the prince at a Tyrolean costume ball, sharing him with several pretty girls in traditional folk dances. The party lingered on for a week, leaving Kitzbühel on the midnight express for Vienna on February 16. A blizzard delayed the train for several

hours. As the locomotive inched its way painfully forward, teams of workmen, carrying lanterns, dug fiercely away at the snowdrifts. At last, the royal party arrived on the seventeenth and Sir Walford Selby greeted them at the station with a Rolls Royce and ermine rugs. The party was driven slowly through heavy snowflakes down the Ringstrasse to the beautiful old Hotel Bristol, where an entire floor had been reserved. Wallis loved it on sight.

It was a charged time in Vienna. Austria had emerged from World War I a broken and dispirited nation. Starvation, financial ruin, and spiritual despair were followed by a conviction that the only hope of the future lay in an alliance with Germany. Members of the Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, though ostensibly to the left of center, were entirely for friendly relations with the Nazis. When Hitler came to power, he made it clear that, as a born Austrian, he expected Austria to be absorbed into the Third Reich. When it was clear that Germany would not accept the country as an equal, Austria turned to Mussolini. All policy was carried out in the closest consultation and collaboration with the Italian dictator. Parliamentary government was abolished; socialism was crushed by the Fascists. Just days before

the prince and Wallis arrived in Vienna, Socialists and Communists had demonstrated and distributed leaflets in the Vienna suburbs, and ten had been arrested. There was rioting, marking the anniversary of the defeated Social Democratic revolution of the year before. More arrests followed; the day after the prince and Wallis arrived, police and Socialists clashed violently at Floridsdorf, and forty-five more were arrested during radical meetings. There were mixed demonstrations outside the Bristol; some workers felt that the Prince of Wales was on their side; others felt he was pro-Fascist. Leaving a nervous Wallis behind, he took off on the seventeenth for his first visit to the Chancellery to meet with President Miklas, Chancellor von Schuschnigg, and Vice-Chancellor von Stahremberg. George Messersmith, American minister to Austria, who had spies at the meetings, reported on the political content to the State Department later that month. The purpose was to establish the solidarity of the so-called Balkan Entente, that group of southern European nations which joined in uneasy alliance with Italy in opposing Hitler's influence. However, as Messersmith pointed out in his report, the Prince of Wales was anxious that the Labour party in England might not ap-

prove of his contact with the Austrian Fascist government, and for this reason he insisted that the high-level meetings be downplayed or ignored in the press. The prince, Messersmith's report continued, also made a special visit to the immense and elaborate worker apartments, built by the former Socialist regime. On February 20 Wales, accompanied by the well-known journalist and author G. E. R. Gedye, made a tour of the Goethe-Hof and Karl Marx-Hof flats while Wallis shopped and went to a beauty parlor. Two government members, Major Lahr and Herr Kresse, were in attendance on the tour. Since the international press followed the prince around on foot, he was careful not to show more than a glassy-eyed interest in his hosts' aggressive praise for the achievements of the Fascist government. He disconcerted his companions by asking many questions about laundries, bathrooms, and the excellence of the buildings' plumbing. He said loudly to Major Lahr, referring to the government's attack on the Karl Marx-Hof, "Where did you put that battery of guns which knocked all those holes in the *left wing*?" As he left to return to the hotel, several Socialist workers began swarming in against the police cordon, shouting at him loudly. But others clashed with their fellows,

screaming, "At least the prince comes to see how we live!"

That night the prince took Wallis out to several nightclubs and to the elegant Rotter Bar. He deliberately wore a red carnation in his buttonhole, Austrian socialism's symbolic badge. Asked by a local police chief to remove it, he replied sharply, "Nonsense. I stand by the workers of Vienna and I'm going to show it!" Yet, at the same time, it was clear to shrewd observers that his real sympathies lay with the government.

After shopping for jewelry and clothes with Wallis, followed by eager crowds, the prince later returned alone, arousing much cynical comment, to buy lingerie. As a result, various comedians in both Vienna and Berlin played him mockingly in drag.

Further meetings took place between the prince and the government leaders on the subject of the proposed restoration of Archduke Otto von Hapsburg, which would bring back the ancient Austro-Hungarian Empire, dissolved at the end of World War I, and for which the prince had a powerful nostalgia. He and Wallis visited the Lipizzaner stables at the



A portrait of Wallis at the age of 25 by Lee Goodale Bigelow, San Diego, 1921. *(author's collection)*



Commander Earl Winfield Spencer, Wallis's first husband, in middle age.

*(AP/Wide World Photos)*



Wallis (right) with a friend in San Diego, 1922. *(author's collection)*



The Pensacola Country Club, where Wallis met Earl Winfield Spencer for romantic evening trysts.

*(Pensacola Historical Society/author's collection)*



Wallis (right) with friends at the Coronado polo field, 1922. *(author's collection)*



Wallis (center) at a fancy dress ball in Coronado, 1926.  
*(UPI/ Bettmann Newsphotos)*



Ernest Simpson.  
*(UPI/ Bettmann Newsphotos)*



King George V presenting his son the Prince of Wales to the Welsh people after his investiture in 1911.  
(Central Press/ Pictorial Parade)



The four sons of King George V: (left to right) Prince George, the Duke of Kent; the Prince of Wales; Prince Albert, the Duke of York, who would later ascend to the throne as King George VI upon the abdication of Edward; and Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester. (Pictorial Parade)



(Left to right) Lady Furness, mistress of the Prince of Wales, the prince, Countess Dalkeith, and the Duke of Kent. (*Pictorial Parade*)



Freda Dudley Ward, mistress of the Prince of Wales.  
(*Topham Picture Library, Kent, England*)



Mrs. Ernest Simpson at Bryanston Court around the time of her meeting the Prince of Wales. (*Pictorial Parade*)



(Left to right) Lord Brownlow, Mrs. Herman Rogers, Mrs. Simpson, and Mr. Rogers at the Château de Candé, December 1936. (*The Photo Source, Ltd., London*)

A montage showing English Fascist support for King Edward VIII. (*Blackshirt magazine/author's collection*)

*Stand by the King*

*Crisis*  
December, 1936



*"Absolute Loyalty to the Throne"*



Blackshirts saluting King Edward VIII with the Nazi salute, 1936. (*author's collection*)



Wallis dressed for her presentation at court.  
(Topham Picture Library, Kent, England)



King Edward VIII making his abdication speech, 1936.  
(The Times, London / Pictorial Parade)



The Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Simpson at the Château de Cande, May 1937. At this time, the duke was demanding that his future wife be addressed as "Her Royal Highness," an honor that was never accorded her. (UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

Spanish Riding School; she loved the equestrian display that had the prince clapping his hands and jumping up and down like a child. The couple strolled fascinated through the gingerbread excesses of the Schönbrunn Palace.

He and Wallis proceeded by train to Budapest. The Hungarian capital, then at the height of its sophistication and gaiety, was ablaze with light to greet them. There, the pro-Mussolini government was even more repressive than in Austria. Conducting an uncomfortable love-hate relationship with its neighbor nation, Hungary was also firmly allied with the Balkan Entente at the time. The prince had meetings with Admiral Horthy, regent, and the ferocious General Gombös, whose repressive regime (he would soon dissolve the existing government) had already offended many informed commentators. Once again the prince discussed the Hapsburg restoration and the necessary anti-Hitler alliances with Italy. At the same time, he and Wallis enjoyed the baroque pleasures of the Danube Palace Hotel, the casino, and shops filled with antique Hungarian jewelry. The future King of England startled the clients at the St. Gellert Thermal Bathing Palace by appearing before them stark naked.

At night, Budapest awaited: the most glam-

orous, corrupt, and beautiful capital city of its era, with dazzling nightclubs, restaurants, and sidewalk cafés. The prince and Wallis must have remembered Leo von Hoesch's gypsy czardas parties as they listened to the haunting strains of the local bands in various smoky cellars. Wallis loved the czardas. One night, February 23, with the sons of Regent Horthy, the prince and Wallis practiced traditional dances to a wildly applauding crowd at the Arizona Nightclub, famous for its performing animals, stripteases, trapeze acts, and multicolored strobe lighting. Wallis drew much attention, wearing a rainbow-tinted coat that appeared to be made of spun glass and an exquisite diamond clip in her hair.

The visit was a success from every point of view. Both Austria and Hungary were now more firmly bound into the Italian orbit because of the prince's influence, thereby restricting Hitler's power. When the prince and his party returned on February 28 to Paris, a huge crowd greeted them at the Gare de L'Est. Police seized cameras and smashed bulbs, but several photographs appeared. When Wallis and the prince got off the boat train in London, they fled through the crowd to York House to

change hastily for dinner at Lady Cunard's. It had been an exciting, exhausting trip.

During the spring of 1935 Wallis went everywhere at night triumphant, blazing with emeralds. Henry "Chips" Channon noted that at a lunch party on April 4, 1935, Wallis "already had the air of a personage who walks into a room as though she almost expected to be curtseyed to. She has complete power over the Prince of Wales." On May 31 an incident took place at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The prince and Wallis were guests of Lady Cunard in her box. When the first intermission came, Wallis said sharply to the Prince of Wales, "Hurry off now, David. You'll be late for the London County Council Ball. And take that cigar out of your breast pocket. It doesn't look very pretty!"

That spring London society was agog over the upcoming Silver Jubilee of King George. Enormous sums were being spent to make the grimy city look reasonably festive; the buildings were bedecked with flags and flowers, and bonfires were lit the length and breadth of England. The king made it clear to his erring son that Wallis would not be welcome at the Jubi-

lee Ball; as a divorced person, she would also be forbidden access to the royal enclosure at Ascot and would be denied any other privileges over which the royal family had any control.

The king confronted the prince directly in the matter of Wallis. The prince gave his father his word of honor that he had never had sexual intercourse with her. This, of course, may have been true if he and Wallis were still merely indulging in fetishistic sexual games that did not involve a total consummation of their relationship. The prince insisted Wallis was "a fine person" and had made him "supremely happy," unlike Thelma Furness, who was, he disloyally said, "a beast." He insisted once more that Wallis was not his mistress and begged that she be allowed to enter the royal enclosure and make an appearance at the Jubilee Ball. The king replied that he would, in view of the fact that the relationship with Wallis was (as he incorrectly believed it) strictly platonic, arrange for the Simpsons to be invited. Lord Wigram, the monarch's private secretary, wrote in his diary:

The Prince's staff were horrified at the audacity of the statements of [H.R.H.] the Prince of

Wales. Apart from actually seeing H.R.H. and Mrs. S[impson] in bed together, they had positive proof that H.R.H. actually lived with her.

The ball took place on May 14. According to tradition, the prince opened the evening by dancing with his mother. He created a stir by walking straight to Wallis and whirling her around the floor for the second number. To make matters worse, he even danced with her straight past his parents, who gave her a look of steely distaste. She was mortified.

After the ball Wallis, the prince, and a party of friends went dancing at the Embassy Club until 4 a.m. The novelist Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, author of *The Lodger*, noted that Wallis kept both the prince's and Ernest Simpson's cigars in her jeweled handbag and handed them out like gifts of candy to naughty schoolboys. When Mrs. Lowndes told her husband about that on her return home, he said, "I've heard of the price of shame, but never that it took the form of a cigar."

Wallis was determined that she would see the jubilee procession to St. Paul's Cathedral. York House did not have a satisfactory view. On the morning of the day of the procession,

the Prince of Wales telephoned his father's assistant secretary, Helen Hardinge, the wife of Major the Honorable Sir Alexander Hardinge. The Hardinges lived in a grace-and-favor house near York House at St. James's Palace that had an excellent position from which to see the procession. He told Helen Hardinge, "Two of my scullery maids badly need to see the parade. Could you make room at one of your windows?" Mrs. Hardinge obliged. When she and her husband left for St. Paul's, the two "scullery maids" arrived. They were Wallis and Lady Cunard. Mrs. Hardinge was furious.

Throughout that month members of foreign royalty, including a number of relatives of the monarch, were pouring into London for the Silver Jubilee celebrations. Hitler correctly saw the jubilee as an ideal opportunity to cement the pro-Germanism of so many figures in British royal and aristocratic circles. Aware that the government was still leaning in the direction of Italy, seeking to restrict him in the interest of British balance of power, he strove to correct the situation by selecting a royal flush from the faded deck of cards that the deposed German royal family of Hohenzollern had become. He

knew it would have been a mistake to send the ailing kaiser to London, because the British public would have risen in its wrath against the former enemy. Instead, Hitler shrewdly sent the kaiser's daughter-in-law, Crown Princess Cecilie, and her daughter, Victoria, and her son Ernst August, along with the prince's favorite, Charles, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who was in the SS. These figures, entirely embroiled in Hitler's cause, if only to protect their assets, could be relied upon, the *führer* felt, to make the necessary impression at Buckingham Palace. Wallis inevitably encountered them at the time. Among her new friends were the Prince and Princess von Bismarck, and among the other crucial connections to the royal German cousins were their devoted hosts, Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher. Lady Zia was the White Russian sister of Nada Milford Haven. Sir Harold was head of Electrolux in Britain, and thus an associate of the Swedish multimillionaire Electrolux tycoon, Axel Wenner-Gren, royalist and friend of Field Marshal Goering, who would later play a crucial part in the lives of Wallis and the prince. At the end of May Leo von Hoesch gave an elaborate party at the embassy at Carlton House Terrace for Wallis,

## David, the Bismarcks, Princess Cecilie, and the Wernhers.

At the dinner Wallis was intrigued to hear Princess Cecilie urge the Prince of Wales to make public his desire for closer alliances with Nazi Germany. She suggested that an ideal occasion might be his scheduled address at Queen's Hall to the veterans of World War I who were members of the British Legion. The Legion was already in close touch with its German counterparts, and it was anxious to repair the damage done in World War I by stretching the hand of friendship across Europe. The prince agreed that this idea was excellent. It apparently never occurred to him that by entering into such a commitment, he would expose the double game he was playing with the European powers and greatly annoy his friends in Vienna and Budapest as well as the French government, which was already hand in glove with Mussolini.

On June 19, 1935, to resounding cheers, the prince, without Wallis, walked up to the podium at Queen's Hall and delivered a speech to the Legion that included the words that made explicit his desire to have the conflicts of the Great War forgotten. He was given a standing ovation; most of his audience was still haunted

by the horror of the trenches, the blood, the rats, the rivers of mud, the gassings and explosions. Even as he spoke, German veterans, carrying swastika flags and the blessings of the führer, were on their way to Brighton, where, a few days later, they marched through the streets and appeared at a dinner, hosted by Prince Otto von Bismarck, at which a message was read to them in German from the Prince of Wales. At a ceremony at the Town Hall, Reich League leader Klaus Korres said, "The Prince of Wales is the man of the moment, not only in his own country, but throughout Germany. Heil Hitler!"

The prince's June 19 speech caused considerable controversy. King George was furious, particularly since it was so important to continue with the appeasement policy vis-à-vis Mussolini to protect the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. More importantly, it was essential that members of the royal family did not express themselves publicly on political issues. The prince's speech only served to illustrate his naive and confused political position. Wayward and defiant, he was being meddlesome and irritating in every possible way. Goering and General Count von der Goetz, head of the Reich League of German Officers, sent

approving telegrams. A week later, at a vast assemblage of 200,000 people at Nuremberg, Goering said, after savagely denouncing the Jews, "Germans were profoundly cheered by the declaration of the British heir apparent. He can be sure the German front soldier and the German people grasp most eagerly the hand offered them."

Questions were asked in the House of Commons by Aneurin Bevan, a Labourite member of Parliament for Ebbw Vale, who assailed the new foreign secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, on the matter. Hoare made it clear that the prince had acted on his own, without either sanction or indirect authorization of any sort. Yet, in a sense, Hoare's somewhat righteous response was flawed by hypocrisy, since only six days before the prince's speech, the Anglo-German Naval Agreement had been concluded allowing Hitler, in contravention of the Versailles treaty, to rebuild the German fleet to 35 percent of British strength.

At the same time, Britain's relationship with Italy, so warmly encouraged by the prince, became threatened by the foreign policy of Anthony Eden. After a meeting with Eden in Rome, Mussolini, Count Grandi recalls, beckoned him and with a hard and resolute tone

said, "The English and the French have declared their absolute disinterest in the fate of Austria. . . . Soon the Nazi flag will wave over the Brenner frontier. This is painful but inevitable. Machiavelli wrote, 'If you can't kill your enemy, embrace him.' Some bad day we will be obliged to embrace the Germans. It will not be a pleasant embrace."

Grandi continues:

Mussolini realized that Eden, while taking a belligerent attitude to us, also showed a certain blindness regarding our problems in Africa. Mussolini said to me, "From this moment on, there will be a shift in our foreign policy. Since we are unable to save Europe, we will move into Africa."

English opposition to our actions in Africa vis-à-vis Abyssinia was indecisive. The English neither said no nor yes to our plans for the conquest of Ethiopia. In June 1935 British interests were centered on internal politics because of the imminent general election. But as the year went on, the feeling against Italy intensified.

The Prince of Wales undoubtedly brought whatever influence he had to bear in high cir-

cles to counteract the increasing opposition to Italian colonialism. In this, given her friendship with Grandi, Wallis was in complete concurrence. And yet there was still the contradiction in both cases that Wallis and the prince were paradoxically flirting with the Germans in London. Wallis achieved yet another friendship that provoked the anti-German elements in Whitehall: on June 29 she was a guest of Lord and Lady Londonderry at a time when Londonderry was writing letters of admiration to Hitler (whom he had visited) and was quite unabashedly in support of the Nazi regime. On July 15, with the Prince of Wales's blessing, members of the British Legion were in Berlin, where they were received with gracious consideration by the *führer*.

During this period of enormous publicity and conflicting currents in the world of politics, the Prince of Wales was under great stress. He depended more and more on Wallis for her support, but she still retained an ambiguous attitude toward him. On the one hand, she enjoyed flouting convention, basking in public attention, and increasing her personal power. On the other, as a chilling letter written at the

time to Aunt Bessie makes clear, she was certainly not in love. She was in fact still more distressed by the prince's infantile dependence on her—despite the fact that she had engineered the situation—and his still insistent phone calls and visits. Easily bored, brittle, and restless, she impossibly wanted everything: a stolid and loyal husband and a fully enslaved prince; respectability and notoriety; the comforts of privacy and social prominence. The royal need to be satisfied in every possible way had proved catching.

In July plans were afoot for another political journey to Europe undertaken in the guise of a vacation. Using the pseudonym of Lord Chester, which fooled nobody, the prince took off with Wallis and friends to France, arriving on August 7 at Cannes by the *Blue Train*. Their friends Vice-Consul John Taylor and his wife met them. Apparently indifferent to the prince's support for Hitler's anti-Semitic regime, Sir Philip Sassoon had remained an intimate friend, and he arranged for them to stay at the house of his sister Lady Cholmondeley; her Villa Le Roc was next door to Maxine Elliott's famous Château de l'Horizon. The handsome white residence was situated on the ocean, with an indoor pool, like that on an

ocean liner, ingeniously contained within the rocks on which the house was built. There was also a private yacht slip.

Once again, the trip began as a holiday. The royal party swam, aqua-planed, played golf, and took a local cruise down the coast aboard the yacht *Sister Anne*, owned by the Singer sewing machine heiress, the Hon. Mrs. Reginald ("Daisy") Fellowes. However, there was an undcurrent of danger and tension in those golden, sunlit days. There was fear that communist assassins might shoot and kill the prince. He and Wallis were under guard day and night, unable to leave the villa without both French and British special agents and a detective from Scotland Yard, David Storrier. The guard intensified when, on September 1, a very scared Wallis and the prince set off to Corsica on the *Cutty Sark*, the million-pound yacht of the pro-Nazi Duke of Westminster, one of the richest landowners of England, with vast properties in London. The voyage was an act of folly, since the vessel moored at terrorist-haunted Corsica. As it happened, the communists did not act, and on September 9, after weeks of sun and sea and parties with, among others, Herman and Katherine Rogers, the controversial couple took off for Budapest.

They stopped briefly en route at Geneva, spending the morning at watch factories and the afternoon meeting with the private secretary of Sir Samuel Hoare, who filled them in on Hoare's activities at the League of Nations. Italian forces were poised to invade Abyssinia, the enormous and impoverished cotton-growing kingdom of Emperor Haile Selassie, in Africa. Hoare was prepared to allow Mussolini a free hand in that region for a variety of reasons, among them the guaranteed protection of substantial British economic interests, including railways and farms, and an unwritten guarantee that the Italian dictator would not blockade the Suez Canal and launch an attack on the British Mediterranean Fleet and Gibraltar.

On September 11 Wallis and the prince arrived in Budapest. The headlines there were full of Hitler's speech the day before to the Nuremberg Rally, condemning Jewish Marxism and the Centerist Moderate party and promising harsher methods against both in the future. Once more, the prince had meetings with Regent Horthy, and he joined President Gombös for luncheon. He was continuing with his clumsy double game of sustaining the Italian connection to make sure that in keeping with British foreign policy, there would be no

interference with Mussolini's colonial expansions. The couple proceeded to Vienna, where the prince again combined visits to the Spanish riding school, tea parties, and nightclubbing with high-level discussions at the Chancellery.

There was a quick trip to Munich to appease the Germans and then a hair-raising car ride over the Trans-Alpine Highway to France. While in Paris, the couple formed two more associations. The first of these was with Albert Frederic Armand Gregoire, who was described in a confidential report of the Paris *Sûreté* on April 9, 1934, as "one of the most dangerous of Nazi spies." Wallis hired him as her lawyer; he represented Simpson, Spence and Young's business with North German Lloyd and the Hamburg-American Line in France. He also was attorney for Joachim von Ribbentrop and for Otto Abetz, later the German ambassador to Paris; and he was Sir Oswald Mosley's chief contact in Paris.

Robust, swarthy, with a dueling scar across his left cheek, Gregoire was born in Metz, Alsace-Lorraine, in 1894. He was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, by Kaiser Wilhelm II, and he became a close friend of the Crown Prince and of the Crown Princess Cecilie. He was a founder and director of Marcel Bucard's

fanatical Franciste movement, one of the leading Fascist cells in France. Under the pseudonym of Greg le Franc, he contributed pro-Hitler articles to *Le Franciste*, the inflammatory official journal of the movement.

In the issue of January 1934 (volume I, no. 2), he had written:

Naturally, we hope with all our heart for an alliance with Nazi Germany. We fully realize that this alliance constitutes the only possible means of avoiding the universal corruption of the world. We estimate that this alliance is possible, easier in fact to realize than an alliance with the British, our hereditary former enemies, with whom we have far less in common than we have with the Germans.

Wallis's use of the notorious Gregoire as a contact and attorney (in 1937 she would have him represent her in a major libel suit) was a disaster, and the watch on her by the Secret Intelligence Service intensified. While in Paris, Wallis and the prince also became a friend of Pierre Laval, premier of France. Devious, unreliable, famous for his greasy look and his washable white tie that was never washed, Laval was married to a charming and elegant wife. He

followed the policy of trying to please the Balkan nations, the Germans, and the Italians while secretly pitching one against the other. His dream was to give the Germans a free hand to smash the Soviet Union while keeping Hitler and Mussolini apart to preserve the French balance of power. He despised the British, despite their agreement with him on this issue.

While in Paris, Wallis was at last propelled into the highest levels of European power. Hitherto, the Prince of Wales had excluded her from meetings with heads of state, leaving her to go shopping while he indulged in duplicitous games of European politics. Now he made a move which was not only scandalous in the eyes of Buckingham Palace but also significant in illustrating the confidence he placed in Wallis and his need for her to become his royal consort. He arranged for her to attend a luncheon for Laval given by the British ambassador, Sir George Clerk, at the embassy on October 1.

The timing of the luncheon was extraordinary. For weeks Anthony Eden, as Britain's representative at the League of Nations, had

been conferring with Laval on the delicate matter of the secret French alliance with Mussolini, which Eden opposed. That January Laval, in Rome, had entered into an agreement with the Italian dictator that would subsequently give him a free hand in Abyssinia. Now, the Prince of Wales chose to confirm that he would stand behind Laval in the outright support of Mussolini's colonial ambitions, a fact to which Laval would testify in August 1945 when he stood trial on charges of treason against France.\* It was a unique occasion: the heir to the throne being accompanied by his mistress to a political encounter sanctioned by a British ambassador. Laval's son-in-law, the distinguished Paris lawyer Comte René de Chambrun, a direct descendant of Lafayette, has at last revealed the secrets of the meeting to this author.† During the conference the prince promised to secure the approval of his father, King George, and of his government for Laval's policy vis-à-vis Mussolini. In return, the Comte de Chambrun states, Mussolini would

\* At his trial at Nuremberg, Ribbentrop tried unsuccessfully to summon the Duke of Windsor as a witness.

† Only part of which appears in the minutes published in Sir George Clerk's decoded report to London in the British foreign policy documents.

be made to promise that he would not enter into an alliance with the *führer* that would endanger Britain and France. At the same time, Laval's assurance was required and given that he would allow Britain to use French ports if at any stage in the future there should be a direct conflict with Italy in the Mediterranean.

The Comte de Chambrun today regards this meeting as an indication of the boldness and intelligence of both his father-in-law and the Prince of Wales. But he has overlooked a significant detail. One day before the embassy conference, Hitler had given assurances to Laval, widely published in the international press, though ignored by subsequent historians, that he would not take action against France no matter what arrangements Laval made with Italy. Those assurances had been made through Sir Samuel Hoare. It was clear from this announcement that Hitler was already planning to enter into an alliance with Mussolini in order to secure a permanent foothold in the Mediterranean and joint control of Austria and the Balkans.

During the next days Wallis, the prince of Wales, and Laval, in the company of Madame

Laval and Laval's daughter Josée, exchanged many visits. The Lavals came to dinner at the Hotel Meurice, and Wallis and the prince went to the Lavals' house. Once again, including Wallis in such a high-level series of meetings was extraordinary; she was being treated as princess, fellow politician, and diplomat. At one meeting, at which Wallis was not present, Laval suggested that the prince should try to make an arrangement with Germany which would bring Mussolini and the *führer* together. Laval said that he was sure Mussolini would accept an honorable agreement and suggested to the prince that he should talk with King George. The prince replied, "My father doesn't meddle in politics, but I will certainly talk to him."

It was now clear to the Prince of Wales that it was not necessary to play a double game between the German and Italian dictators, that they could be brought together to a common purpose. That this purpose was the breaking of the Franco-Soviet pact, the prevention of the spread of bolshevism, and the crushing of the Soviet Union has been made clear to the author by the Comte de Chambrun.

While all this questionable maneuvering was going on, Wallis had other things on her mind.

In the spring she and the prince had attended the salon showings of the great fashion designer Mainbocher, whom she admired and loved. Main Rousseau Bocher (his real name) was American born. High strung, sensitive, and darkly handsome, he had risen from a career as illustrator to preeminence in his field under the guidance of his mother, Wallis's friend the Countess de Mun. Sponsored by the wealthy Kitty Bache, heiress and wife of the theatrical producer Gilbert Miller, Mainbocher designed for Irene Dunne, Loretta Young, Miriam Hopkins, and Constance Bennett. At the recommendation of Lady Mendl, Wallis chose him as her designer. She liked to see him selecting her fabrics, and she worked with him as closely as any colleague as he, short, stocky, relentlessly energetic, rushed from one end of the salon to the other, challenging his staff by the minute, dashing off drawings by the handful, and taking calls from Hollywood, London, Berlin, and New York. It was Mainbocher who created, in effect, the "Wallis look" that became world famous the following year. The clothes he made for her were severe, classical, and timeless. They were the opposites of the extravagant creations favored by many of the prominent society women of the time. Even today, photo-

graphs of Wallis taken at the time show that she was stepping out of period, dressing in styles and colors that would still look contemporary half a century later.

One day after the meeting at the British Embassy, the plans of the Prince of Wales and Pierre Laval came to fruition. Mussolini was granted by the British passage of 150,000 troops through the Suez Canal. He invaded Abyssinia, wreaking devastation and destruction. His troops used mustard gas, forbidden by international law because of its horrifying effects—blindness, madness and death.

Simpson, Spence and Young had a vested interest in pursuing the issue of the invasion of Ethiopia. The Italian Commander Treves was a close associate of a partner of Ernest Simpson's. The firm was seeking to obtain a loan on the London Stock Exchange to finance the development of a cotton-growing industry in Abyssinia. Treves and the firm persistently besieged the Treasury for permission to exploit the appropriate territory. In this, documents show, they were directly backed by the Italian government through the trade attaché to the embassy in London. The argument for obtaining the loan was that if the cotton growing of Abyssinia were financed by a country other

than Britain, a serious competitor to the Egyptian cotton industry would be created. The Egyptian cotton industry was under British control. The application was not favorably received as the Treasury saw it as a combined move of Ciano and Wallis's husband. It is hardly surprising in view of this latest maneuver that the Secret Intelligence Service was even more concentrated on Wallis.

On September 7 Wallis was to add a revealing touch to this matter when she wrote to her Aunt Bessie, "If war between Italy and Abyssinia takes place, perhaps shipping will take a leap and I'll be able to come over [to America]."

Back in London, according to Laval's statement under oath at his trial, the prince took the matter of Mussolini and Hitler to King George V. The monarch then allegedly agreed that nothing must be done to stop the Italian dictator in his path of conquest. However, Anthony Eden, possibly out of guilt for having smoothed the path to the destruction of a hapless nation, began to press for sanctions against Italy at the League of Nations. In this, he was violently opposed by the Prince of Wales. Six months later the prince would be telling Ambassador Dino Grandi that he wanted Italians

to know he was on their side and that he regarded the British government's attempt to support the League's sanctions policy as "grotesque and criminal." He never ceased to maintain, in later years, that Mussolini should never have been interfered with.

Count Grandi recalls:

Several meetings and discussions took place between myself and leading figures of British Government upon the sanctions issue. Sir Robert Vansittart shared with Eden the view that the application of sanctions was not merely designed to give us an indication of the British attitude, but also was indirectly an indication to Nazi Germany to desist from its territorial ambitions. However, the only effect it had, unfortunately for all concerned, was to push us directly into Germany's arms.

I tried to warn Eden of this, without success. I had several very difficult meetings with him. Following the meetings, I felt it necessary to confer with the Prince of Wales. I always went through Mrs. Simpson. I would telephone her at home, and ask her if she could make the necessary arrangements. She did so, and the meetings took place around ten o'clock at night. The Prince was always very receptive to

what I had to say and lent a very attentive ear. This was true also later, when he became King.

During the fall of 1935 the old king was ill. He was worn out by the stress of maintaining a grueling series of official appointments that taxed his waning strength unendurably. The matter of Wallis was among the greatest of his burdens. On October 31 he and Queen Mary spoke with great sadness and fierceness about the prince to the former Austrian ambassador to London, their old friend Count Mensdorff. They told Mensdorff of the prince's bringing Wallis into Buckingham Palace against their will. "That woman in my own house!" King George exclaimed. The monarch continued, "My son's former mistress, Lady Furness, was also frightful. The first, Mrs. Dudley Ward, was of a much better class and a lady of good society. [My son] has not a single friend who is a gentleman [and] does not see any decent society." Count Mensdorff said, "The Prince has so many attractive qualities, charm and giftedness." To which the king replied, "Yes, certainly. That is the pity. If he was a fool we would not mind. I hardly ever see him and don't know what he is doing." In December

the monarch told Lady Gordon-Lennox, "I pray to God that my eldest son will never marry and have children, and that nothing will come between Bertie and Lilibet [the Duke of York and his elder daughter Princess Elizabeth, now Queen Elizabeth II] and the throne."

King George was desperate to prevent the possibility of Wallis's marrying the prince and becoming queen. According to the equerry to Queen Mary, the late Hon. John Coke, the monarch stooped to the gutter. With the king's approval, the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin (who had replaced Ramsay MacDonald), authorized Scotland Yard to conduct a search of records in Baltimore that may well have established Wallis's birth out of wedlock and her failure to be baptized, which in addition to her divorce would have rendered any religious marriage invalid in the eyes of the church. In addition, connections were made through the Secret Intelligence Service in Hong Kong that resulted in what became known as the "China dossier."

The historian John Costello points out that Baldwin was especially sensitive on any matters concerning China, as he had been prime minister in the mid-1920s, during part of Wallis's sojourn and during the severest conflicts in that

nation, when British commercial interests, missionaries and members of the diplomatic corps had been seriously threatened. Through the Secret Intelligence Service, and through a peripatetic freelance agent named Emmanuel Cohen, he had established substantial connections in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Peking that would be fully authorized and equipped to determine anything untoward about Wallis's past that he wished to know.

The file contained interviews with brothel madams confirming that Wallis entered into "perverse practices" (Coke's words) in the sing-song houses, as well as (according to the historian of the queen's jewels, Leslie Field, who had access to certain crucial information) details of her drug dealing and gambling. Coke described the contents to the Windsors' friend Kenneth de Courcy during the 1936 abdication crisis, and again in 1951. Did the file contain word of her affair with Count Ciano and abortion of his child? Or her alleged spying for the Russians? Clearly, this hastily assembled dossier was to be held in reserve as the trump card should Wallis attempt to marry the prince. Meanwhile, the Prince of Wales became involved with still more questionable associations. Jewish Defense League documents show

that he was in touch with Dr. Frank Buchman, an American clergyman who headed the so-called Oxford Group or Moral Rearmament Movement, which had millions of followers all over the world. Dr. Buchman was a close friend of Himmler's and had stayed with him in Germany. He would soon become notorious for his statement, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler." Among Dr. Buchman's British admirers were Sir Samuel Hoare, Prime Minister Baldwin, the Earl of Clarendon, the Marquess of Salisbury, and the Earl of Cork and Orrery.

In the meantime, the British Union of Fascists expressed its continuing admiration of the Prince of Wales. Although Sir Oswald Mosley was careful not to be too overt in his relationships with Wallis and the prince, he was at his most drastically active in this period. Even during the jubilee celebrations, his Blackshirt brigades had given the Fascist salute to King George. Hundreds of meetings were held every week in various parts of Britain. Jews and Communists were beaten up by Mosley's gangsters. And Jews were among the leaders of the movement, including the well-known boxing champion Kid Lewis, Mosley's Gauleiter. In addition, the Nazi party established its own

headquarters in London and was equally interested in the Prince of Wales. Rudolf Hess, deputy to the *führer*, was in charge along with Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, British-born chief of the Ausland Organisation, the organization of Germans living abroad.

As 1935 drew to its close, the king weakened still further. He was greatly distressed by the death of his beloved sister Princess Victoria. Hitler sent a message of sympathy. In December the Prince of Wales, with Wallis, flew to Paris to confer once more with Pierre Laval on the matter of Abyssinia and the continuing appeasement of Mussolini. This visit was understandably kept secret, and has only now been revealed by Comte René de Chambrun. Sir Samuel Hoare joined in the discussions at Rambouillet. Laval proposed that the war would be brought to an end with the following arrangement. Abyssinia would be granted 3000 square miles of largely useless territory in Italian Somaliland. Mussolini would be granted a huge slice of the African nation's richest cotton lands. This obnoxious arrangement was supposed to be kept hidden until the matter could be presented to the League of Nations. The accomplished "Pertinax" (André Geraud), foreign correspondent of the *Echo de Paris* and

contributor to the London *Daily Telegraph*, somehow succeeded in obtaining the text of the Hoare-Laval agreement and published it in both newspapers. It was instantly denounced in the House of Commons, though none of the members knew of the Prince of Wales's role in the matter. Hoare was violently abused and gave a speech of futile explanation before the Commons. The prince rashly took the step of supporting Hoare publicly by appearing in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery to hear the speech. He allegedly applauded it, thus attracting untoward attention amid a chorus of boos.

According to Count Grandi:

Hoare made a fool of himself over the Hoare-Laval issue. English public opinion was not prepared by a cautious and shrewd government policy, so the pact idea fell startlingly upon the British people, like a dash of cold water against burning steel. It was a terrible mishap. Had the proposals been accepted, Italy would have been satisfied and Mussolini would never have joined Hitler. Nor would he have extended his empire.

Mussolini later tried to let it be believed that he had refused the Hoare-Laval proposal, but that is not true. He called a Grand Council

meeting on December 10, and the acceptance of the Hoare-Laval proposal was on the agenda. I will never forget calling from London with news of what was going on in the House of Commons. Mussolini interrupted the Grand Council meeting to talk to me, and expressed great astonishment and disillusionment.

In his frequent meetings with Grandi at the time, the Prince of Wales unquestionably was in total concord on this matter. To the end of his days he would tell anyone who would listen (and the editor and author Frank Giles went on record on this matter in his memoirs) that the biggest mistake ever made by England was in the matter of Mussolini and Abyssinia.

Wallis also remained in agreement. Nor could she forget that the foreign minister of Italy, Count Ciano, was the father of her dead child. She was happy, despite her pro-fascism, to spend Christmas with the Jewish Sir Philip Sassoon at Trent Park. Meanwhile, the prince was at Sandringham with his parents. In the wake of the "China dossier" and the research in Baltimore, the atmosphere was even more charged than usual. The prince made a touching effort to assuage his father by ordering the royal caterer, Frederick Corbitt, to obtain a

dozen avocados as a Christmas present to the king. Corbitt had the formidable task of finding the elusive fruit in the midst of a savage English winter. According to Corbitt's memoirs (some historians have questioned the veracity of the story), when the avocados arrived, the prince had them served vinaigrette to the king, who ungratefully snapped, "What in heaven's name is this?" His father's lack of appreciation for the gesture radically upset the prince, who telephoned and wrote Wallis that he was utterly depressed and distraught with the situation in his family.

The Prince of Wales took over for his father at several official functions. He was not at all eager when asked what would happen after he assumed the throne. He frequently said to friends, "My brother Bertie would make a much better King than I would." He even addressed the Duchess of York as "Queen Elizabeth" in private. He talked of moving to his ranch in the Canadian Rockies for the rest of his days.

January was a typically harsh month in England; the nation was swept by snow and sleet and driving winds. The old monarch developed

bronchitis, a condition aggravated by his unfortunate habit of smoking heavily. On January 16 the prince, who had been shooting in Windsor Great Park, walked into the drawing room at Fort Belvedere and handed Wallis a note. It was in Queen Mary's handwriting and read: "I think you ought to know that Papa is not very well." The queen went on to suggest that the prince should come to Sandringham for the weekend, but should be careful not to reveal his concern to his ailing father.

The prince took Wallis's hands in his. They knew the king was dying. Soon the prince would be King of England. Would Wallis then divorce Ernest Simpson and become queen?

When the prince arrived at Sandringham, he found his father, painfully thin and frail, seated in an old Tibetan robe, shivering before a big, open log fire. The king was scarcely able to recognize his son. A team of physicians led by the royal doctor, Lord Dawson of Penn, had determined that, in addition to the bronchial catarrh from which the monarch was suffering, there were signs of cardiac weakness that were sufficient to cause alarm. Lord Wigram, the principal private secretary, was informed that the king would not live. He discussed the arrangements that would take place for the suc-

cession with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. The following day, Wales and York drove to London to confer with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. The queen was especially concerned about the upkeep of Sandringham. A joint-stock company was discussed, in which the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York would contribute to the upkeep. However, Wales expected to inherit a life interest in Sandringham and Balmoral when he became monarch. The maintenance of both residences would be drawn from Crown funds. The queen was upset; she also dreaded the thought that her son might give the jewelry of the late Princess Victoria, whose death had greatly upset King George, to Mrs. Simpson. She made sure that the will divided the jewelry between the princess royal and the Duchesses of York, Gloucester, and Kent.

On January 19 the king began to sink into his final sleep. He murmured to Lord Wigram, "How is the Empire?" "All is well, Sir, with the Empire," Wigram replied. At noon the king managed to sign a document permitting the appointment of a Council of State. While Wallis waited by the telephone at Bryanston Court, the Prince of Wales flew back to Sandringham with the Duke of York, and after din-

ner he and his brothers York and Kent drew up plans for the funeral. At 10 p.m. the king was already in a coma. It was decided that if he lived past midnight, his death announcement would miss the morning edition of the *London Times*; in view of this unfortunate potentiality, and his grievous suffering, it was decided to terminate his life immediately. At eleven o'clock Lord Dawson—improperly, according to the law, which forbade euthanasia— injected three-quarters of a grain of morphia and one grain of cocaine into the king's distended jugular vein when the nurse in attendance refused to undertake the task. Within fifteen minutes the royal life was extinct, and before the BBC broadcast of the news at ten minutes after twelve, the *London Times* was advised. The Prince of Wales called Wallis, who was with Lady Mendl's assistant and protégé, Johnny McMullen, at Bryanston Court. The prince was hysterical, all the pent-up emotion and stress of the past few weeks bursting out of him in racking, heartbreaking sobs. This did not help his mother, who was a pillar of control and suppressed grief. At last, the new king recovered himself and said to Lord Wigram in a characteristic American form of expression, the result of Thelma's and Wallis's influence, "I

hope I will make good as [my father] has made good."

Through the night and much of the next day, the prince called the anxious but irritable Wallis countless times, telling her of each successive stage of the preparations for the next few days. There was some discussion of a possible cremation, which, according to some authorities, would have set a precedent, but this was not followed through. Everyone remembered the ghastly episode of the burial of the Duke of Teck, when the body, afflicted by a septic condition, burst open with a loud report during the funeral procession. Because of this disagreeable memory, it was decided to embalm the king.

The Prince of Wales left with the Duke of York by plane for London to discuss matters with the Accession Council, and to be officially declared king. Meanwhile, the royal coffin rested at Sandringham Church. On January 22 the official public proclamations took place in London. Wallis, at the new monarch's specific request, watched the ceremony, fascinated, from a tall window at York House. For an hour before ten o'clock, Friary Court was drab and without vivid colors, the gray-stone Tudor walls of St. James's Palace blending in with the som-

ber gray greatcoats of the guards standing at attention. But as the first stroke of the hour clanged from the giant clock, the crimson-draped palace balcony suddenly blazed with color. The officers of arms—the heralds and pursuivants—emerged in the vivid scarlet-and-gold tabards of long tradition. The trumpeters played a royal fanfare. A cannon boomed, a volley for each year of the king's reign, startling flocks of pigeons from the walls and resounding across St. James's Park. Sir Gerald Wollaston, garter principal king of arms, read the proclamation of accession, speaking of "our own lawful and rightful liege," in terms appropriate to medieval times.

As the guns thundered, almost drowning out his words, Wallis felt a firm hand gripping hers. The king stood next to her. He had again broken all tradition by coming to watch his own accession with her.

They were seen driving off together in the royal car; he dropped Wallis off at Bryanston Court before continuing to Buckingham Palace. At 2:30 he was on his way to Sandringham. Upon his arrival there he joined his mother and the rest of the family to hear the reading of the will by the royal solicitor, Sir Halsey Bircham. To the king's horror, he was

not included. Clause after clause was read out, and every few minutes he would interject an anguished, "Where do I come in?" Sir Halsey was obliged to say that he did not. Wigram stated that the king had not been left an inheritance because it was presumed that he had built up a substantial sum of savings from the Duchy of Cornwall. However, the king was beside himself with rage. He exclaimed, "My brothers and sister have all this money and I have nothing!" At that time he had saved from the Duchy of Cornwall an estimated million pounds sterling in investments and properties, the equivalent of \$5 million, or over \$100 million in today's money. Moreover, he of course had inherited the life interest in Sandringham and Balmoral.

As it happened, the new monarch was very well off indeed. The Duchy of Cornwall earned him at least £364,000 a year. He would receive £425,000 from the Duchy of Lancaster and £2,355,000 from the Civil List. Sandringham and Balmoral were worth at least £5 million. He also had the use of Buckingham Palace, worth £15 million, and containing £10 million in gold plate alone. The palace boasted a collection of old masters worth £5 million. The king had investments that included the ranch

at Calgary, Alberta, with several hundred head of shorthorn cattle, and very substantial stocks in Jewish companies, obtained for him by the Rothschilds.

Wigram was exceedingly disaffected with the new king because of his behavior over the will. He made it clear that he would resign from his post in six months and emphatically would not act as private secretary to the new monarch. His sentiments were shared by a very high proportion of employees on the royal staff, who were appalled by the fact that the king seemed more concerned with his own financial welfare than anything else. Two days later the king stormed into the offices of the Duchy of Cornwall demanding immediate reassurance that no portion of the income, drawn in part from the rentals of the impoverished people of London, would be denied him. He was coldly informed that it would not.

In the meantime, the body of George V had been brought to London to be carried in a simple procession through the streets to Westminster Hall. Something ominous occurred on that somber journey: because of the jolting of the gun carriage that carried the dead monarch, the jeweled Maltese cross surmounting the imperial crown, which had been fixed to the cof-

fin over the royal standard, came loose and fell into the gutter.

A much more elaborate procession, attended by a vast throng of mourning citizens, took place a few days later. There was another unpleasant occurrence as the cortege passed Hyde Park Corner. Years later the king told Henry Grattidge, commodore of the Cunard Lines fleet, that he felt utterly alone at that moment:

There [were] people as far as the eyes [could] see, but you [could] hear no sound at all except the crunch of marching feet. Most horrible . . . as we rounded Marble Arch, the pressure of the crowd was so great that the police ranks broke. . . . The police could no longer control them. The crowd came swarming toward the gun carriage so fast it seemed it might overturn it. [I realized] what a dreadful thing it would be if the coffin fell to the ground, if people fainted around me and were trampled, and I should be powerless to stop it.

Wallis was concerned when the radio commentators said that the king looked exhausted and drawn during the long walk across the city. She had urged him to wear his dead father's heavy greatcoat, and fortunately he had agreed,

but she knew he was susceptible to colds and ear infections and dreaded (unnecessarily, as it turned out) that he might be taken ill. The body at last reached Westminster Hall. For days and nights, close to a million people trooped past the coffin. Officers of the household brigade stood at the four corners of the platform, and funerary candles glowed in the subdued light. In the early hours of one morning, when the crowd had gone, the king, perhaps feeling a twinge of conscience because of his behavior, hit upon the touching gesture of summoning his brothers to stand with him in vigil in between the officers. On another morning he and Wallis came in through a back door and stood in silent contemplation. According to Ribbentrop's biographer, Paul Schwarz, a German agent managed to film them and send the film to Hitler, who giggled uncontrollably as he watched it. He was already in possession of motion pictures of the royal yacht cruises the previous summer and, like Eva Braun, was mesmerized by Wallis's hair, carefully made-up face, and exquisite clothes. He told Frau Ribbentrop he deeply admired Wallis.

In the midst of these sad rituals, with London black-draped in the spirit of mourning, the new monarch somehow managed to fit in

meetings with representatives of Nazi Germany. Even before his father was dead, he had met Leopold von Hoesch and told him that he intended visiting Hitler's Olympic Games that summer.\* He also squeezed in an audience for several groups of German servicemen and, while his father was scarcely cold in his coffin, had a fireside encounter at York House with his cousin Charles, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. He told the Eton-educated Nazi Charles, who was a member of the SS, that he wanted to meet Hitler, that he had the highest admiration for Rudolf Hess, that Ribbentrop had done a very good job with the Anglo-German Naval Agreement. He said that von Hoesch, though a "good representative of the German Reich," was a "bad one for Hitler's Third Reich" and that he as king would require "a representative National Socialist from Germany as Ambassador, who, through his personal rank in society, would belong naturally to the gentry, and who could be regarded as a representative of official policy and the confidante of Hitler." This statement suggested an urgent need for von Hoesch to be replaced by the Windsors' intimate friend the Prince von

\* He was dissuaded by the Foreign Office from attending.

Bismarck, formerly of the Reichstag, who was to take over as chargé d'affaires in March.

One of the king's acts as monarch was to order, in person, that Lendrum and Hartman in Mayfair make an exact copy of the royal Buick, which had originally been manufactured in Canada. The second Buick, with identical license plates and with the royal insignia on the hood, was for Wallis's exclusive use. This was widely considered an outrage in court circles. Wallis acquired a whole series of enemies that January. Chief among these were the severely correct Major the Hon. Alexander Hardinge and Mrs. Hardinge. Helen Hardinge, a woman of old-fashioned moral character, a member of the distinguished Cecil family, detested Wallis. Several of the royal ladies-in-waiting refused to shake hands with Wallis. When Wallis came up to one of them with her hand outstretched, the woman dropped her handbag and bent to pick it up to avoid the contact.

On January 28 Hitler gave an elaborate memorial service for George V in Berlin, improbably finding himself in church for the occasion. He gave Princess Cecilie the place of honor next to him, and Himmler, Goebbels, Goering, and the rest of the cabinet were in attendance. That same night the king gave the customary

ceremonial dinner that followed a royal funeral. This was held at Buckingham Palace. Among the guests were Prince Regent Paul of Yugoslavia, the Italian Prince of Piedmont, and Austrian Vice-Chancellor Ernst von Stahremberg.

Hitler had sent Baron Constantin von Neurath, former ambassador to the Court of St. James, and a close friend of Queen Mary's, to represent him along with Charles of Saxe-Coburg. At the dinner, served in the Gold Dining Room, the king shook everyone's hand rather perfunctorily. But when the turn of von Neurath, Saxe-Coburg, and von Hoesch came, he held up the whole receiving line for twenty minutes, totally breaking protocol, while he talked with them animatedly in German. Everyone noticed this; everyone was meant to. Clearly, the king felt confident that Mussolini and Hitler were now moving so closely together that this gesture would not offend the Prince of Piedmont. He calculated correctly.

He had refused to permit the Russian envoy Maxim Litvinoff to sit at the dining table where his cousin Grand Duke Dimitri of Russia was placed. Instead, he received Litvinoff and all the other nonroyal figures at a separate reception later in the evening. He pointedly ignored Litvinoff, summoning him to a sepa-

rate encounter at Buckingham Palace, where he asked him, "Why did you kill my cousin Czar Nicholas?" Litvinoff cunningly replied, "I didn't. I was among the conservatives."

The king proceeded to irritate almost everyone in his household. He had already annoyed many retainers by changing the clocks, which had been set half an hour fast from the time of his grandparents to save daylight hours for shooting, back to their normal time. He instructed Frederick Corbitt that lunch would no longer be served at one, as it had been for over a century, but would be eaten whenever the mood took him, usually at half past two. This put severe pressure on the kitchens. He made it clear that the staffs at all the royal houses must be ready to answer the ring of a bell at any hour of the day or night. He consulted with Wallis on the royal budget. She advised him to make a clean sweep of the staffs, cutting out deadwood and giving anyone inessential a 10 percent wage cut. To the lasting disgust of Wigram and the Hardinges, he fired many old and ailing retainers. Together, he and Wallis decided that court clothing should be modified and that frock coats should be eliminated. They appeared at York House without warning in the kitchens, maids' quarters, wine and food

cellars, and basement, conducting cursory inspections and making radical changes. Years later, the king told Commander Grattidge that he was amused to find in the bowels of Buckingham Palace a group of tiny men responsible for stoking the boilers, like primitive cave dwellers who never came up for air.

Always a dieter, he cut the food purchases of each of the royal households by two-thirds; he was served salads, fruit, and small cuts of meat. His and Wallis's only indulgence was a delicious Scandinavian dessert called *rødgrød*, made of crushed raspberries, red currants, and rice. He was a little hesitant in bringing Wallis to Buckingham Palace, but one evening he gave her a tour. They decided that the entire antiquated edifice should be remodeled in a modern manner and that, outrage of outrages, it should be redecorated from top to bottom by Lady Mendl. As it turned out, this idea was never executed. By the time Lady Mendl had finished her drawings, the king was off the throne.

The King of England, according to custom, would receive official dignitaries one at a time. This practice greatly aggravated the new monarch, who instead required that groups of offi-

cials appear before him simultaneously, much to the annoyance of many of them. He disposed of the private car supplied by the railways and traveled in ordinary carriages. He did away with a stenographer and typed his own correspondence with two fingers until the sheer number of letters made him give up. He ran up colossal phone bills at the palace. When Wallis was irritated by the phone service, he told her to call the postmaster general to have the problems fixed. They were—at least for the time being.

The world was excited and impressed with the new monarch. In the United States enthralled millions watched the newsreels of his accession. One of his keenest admirers was my father, Sir Charles Higham, who, in an interview at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, accompanied by me, his baby son, said:

King Edward is a young people's king. And England is coming to be a young people's country, as the gap in the ranks of her youth, caused by the war, is being filled with intelligent youngsters. Edward will be their idol. He can ride, dance, fly, mix with the commoners, deal with diplomats. What can't he do? He is fully equipped for his job, if a king ever was.

The German press enthusiastically agreed. Above all, the Italians gloried in the new monarch. And by early 1936 Laval's dream had come true and the Hitler-Mussolini alliance was being formed.

Wallis was under a considerable strain during those first weeks of her lover's reign. Yet she seemed to enjoy the new game of being the king's mistress, writing to Aunt Bessie that she was "laughing a lot inside." Although her apologists have denied it, she had designs on the throne already, since on February 1 she wrote to her aunt for the Warfield and Montague family trees, determined that they would stand up against these "1066 families here." Only a week later she seemed to realize the folly of any thought of becoming queen, writing to Bessie that it would be a good idea if the king were to marry someone of appropriate background. She also made clear that she would never relinquish her power.

There was still nothing in her letters of the time to indicate the slightest degree of love or even affection for the new monarch, only a cold conflict in herself over whether or not she should seek further heights. By contrast, the

king, despite his crowded schedule, seemed to hate every minute he was apart from Wallis; he sent her a stream of letters, inscribed on black-edged mourning stationery printed for his father, expressing an infantile, obsessive adoration, sprinkled with a private code in baby talk.\* Sometime in the late winter he backed his written admiration with a bold financial gesture. He settled £300,000 on Wallis, the equivalent of \$1.5 million, or one-third of his entire life savings. According to *Time* magazine, he later panicked at the size of the gift and reduced it to £100,000. Wallis informed her Aunt Bessie Merryman that the financial arrangements, which Wallis had no doubt requested, had been taken care of. Soon the king would be spending thousands of pounds on jewels for her.

In February Ernest Simpson wished to obtain membership at the Masonic lodge in which both the king and the Duke of Kent, who was grand master, had supreme influence and over which Sir Morris Jenks presided. Jenks turned Simpson down. The king demanded to know why. Jenks told him that it

\* His favorite word was "einum," which, according to a reliable source, was a cross between "eenie" and "meenie" in the toe-counting nursery rhyme.

was against Masonic law to accept a cuckolded husband as a member. Once again, the king insisted his relationship with Wallis was platonic. This, of course, was a mere technicality. As a result, Ernest was admitted.

Sometime in February Ernest went to York House to visit with the king; he was accompanied by a witness, Bernard Rickatson-Hatt of Reuter's. According to Rickatson-Hatt, during the course of the evening Ernest, who was by now in love with Mary Raffray, boldly told the monarch that Wallis would have to choose between them and asked the king what he meant to do about it. Did he intend to marry her? The king replied, "Do you think I would be crowned without Wallis at my side?" Ernest agreed to end the marriage provided the king promised to be faithful to Wallis and look after her.

If this conversation (the veracity of which has been questioned by certain historians) had ever leaked, it would have finished Wallis's chances of divorce the following year; a collusive arrangement would have been exposed by the king's proctor, who had to rule on the matter, and the most famous marriage of the century would never have taken place.

# ALMOST GLORY

In March 1936 the Earl of Harewood, husband of the princess royal, the king's sister, delivered a speech to the British Legion which was a far cry from the king's speech the previous summer. He attacked Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland. Among other things, he was seeking to influence the legion away from its Nazi associations. According to the present Lord Harewood's memoirs *The Tong and the Bones*, the king wrote a stinging rebuke to his brother-in-law, denouncing him for the speech and saying, "How can I make my contributions to foreign policy if my own relatives make irresponsible statements?"

That same month Wallis took off for Paris to

order her spring wardrobe from Mainbocher. Wallis saw a good deal of Mrs. Beatrice Cartwright, heiress to the Standard Oil fortune; Standard Oil had substantial holdings in Germany and continued to collaborate with the Third Reich throughout World War II.\*

While Wallis was in Paris, the situation in Europe darkened. On March 7 Hitler announced that German military detachments had entered the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland in defiance of the terms of the Versailles treaty. The nineteen infantry and three artillery battalions stood on the edge of France, yet the French public seemed apathetic, still carrying memories of the misery and exhaustion of World War I, and anxious to avoid even a show of hostility to the threatening forces of the *führer*. In London the sentiment of the financial leaders was, as British Foreign Office documents make clear, overwhelmingly pro-German and anti-French. That Wallis shared their views was clear from a statement made in a letter to her Aunt Bessie in which she ex-

\* Mrs. Cartwright would soon meet and marry the Nazi collaborator Frederick G. McEvoy, the closest friend of Errol Flynn. Mrs. Cartwright was known to the State Department for her Nazi sympathies.

pressed the hope that the Germans would ill-treat the French couturiers and others who were causing her problems. Her attitude to the French was ambiguous: on the one hand, she loved French food, the Hotel Meurice, Mainbocher's fashion salon, and the glamorous world of French society; but on the other hand she regarded the country as hopelessly corrupt, weak, and ineffectual, a natural victim of the stronger forces of Germany.

As for the King of England, in a report marked "Strictly Confidential," the London correspondent of *Berliner Tageblatt* wrote, through the German Embassy, to his foreign editor on March 18: "[The monarch] has caused a number of important people in the Government to come and see him, and has said to them: 'This is a nice way to start my reign!'" He was referring directly to Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland. Ironically in the context, Wallis expressed concern to her aunt that, in view of the deteriorating international situation, Ernest Simpson, who was continuing to do business with Nazi-controlled shipping companies in Hamburg, might be interned.

Mary Raffray arrived in London. She had seen a good deal of Ernest in New York City

the previous fall, when they became involved in a secret love affair. She was keeping a careful record of Wallis's association with Ribbentrop, which she insisted to her family was a love affair. She "hated" Wallis for it, she wrote to her sister Anne. In a curious reversal of the double standard, Wallis apparently objected to Mary's affair with Ernest; but at the same time she and the king clearly saw the liaison as a perfect way of disposing of Wallis's marriage and clearing the way to remarriage. From as early as mid-March the monarch began to plan the divorce, taking consultation with a number of trusted advisers on the best way to proceed. He was, of course, greatly discouraged by all those in his circle, and he frequently lost his temper over their objections to Wallis as the future queen. One of those whom he dismissed that spring was the honorable and devoted "G" Trotter, who also felt the headsman's ax because he was thought to be in touch with Thelma Furness. According to several sources, Trotter fell on very hard times and was even reduced to becoming a floorwalker in a department store. The king never lifted a finger to help him.

As her power grew, Wallis began to behave with even greater boldness. An extraordinary

situation developed among herself, the king, Ernest, and Mary. They were involved in what rapidly became a flagrant ménage à quatre: Ernest and Mary stayed with Wallis and the king at Fort Belvedere and at Lord Dudley's house, Himley Hall, and the king would spend evenings at Bryanston Court while Ernest and Mary shared the guest bedroom. On April 23 Mary wrote to her sister Anne in St. Louis:

I meet the King often, dined at York House . . . and spent a weekend at the Fort. . . . Saturday night he took us all to Windsor Castle; at the Earl of Dudley's we met Lady Oxford [Margot Asquith], Lady Cunard, Ribbentrop, and Lady Diana Cooper. . . . Wallis is in the thick of things, received and toadied to by everyone on account of her influence with the King. (This you must absolutely not repeat.)

Ribbentrop was in London frequently that spring; while he still had the seventeen red roses delivered every day to Wallis at Bryanston Court, he was arguably the most popular party guest in London. Emerald Cunard, Laura Corrigan, and Lord and Lady Londonderry—Wallis's set—entertained him constantly; he be-

came popularly known as the "Londonderry herr." Ribbentrop was also very close to "Chips" Channon and his wife, who paid court to him. Channon, though a gifted writer, had little power of perception when it came to dealing with leading Nazis; he was intoxicated by the idea of having a German government member at his dinner parties. In his diary entry for June 10, 1936, Channon wrote that Ribbentrop resembled "a jolly commercial traveler." Mrs. Ronald Greville, a friend of Queen Mary's and later of King George VI's and Queen Elizabeth's, was another of his favorite pro-Nazi hostesses. Everywhere he went, he was lavishly praised for his and the *führer*'s defeat of unemployment and bolshevism; some even dared to praise him for the official German policy on the Jews.

It was widely believed (among the alleged witnesses was Mary Kirk Raffray) that Wallis was by now having an affair with Ribbentrop and that he was paying her directly from German funds in Berlin to influence—as if that were necessary—the king. Certainly, as Mary testified in a long, detailed account given to her sister Anne at the time, and subsequently written by Anne as a report to the biographer of

Edward VIII, Frances Donaldson,\* Ribbentrop was constantly in the apartment at Bryanston Court; and it is hard to believe that in this case the thick smoke of gossip had no fire as its source. No such relationship could have made its way into the official files in case their contents should leak back to Ribbentrop's wealthy wife, the champagne heiress Annelise Henkell, and cause her to undermine his position by creating a public scandal. Frau Ribbentrop had young children; she had a jealous, possessive nature; and she must not be allowed to ruin Ribbentrop. As for Wallis, we know from her letters that she was not in love with the Prince of Wales, she was enjoying her power but at the same time was fearful he might want to marry her. No absolute proof exists of the relationship with Ribbentrop, but the people of Wallis's set were certain of it.

On March 27 Edward gave Wallis her finest gift of jewelry: a Van Cleef and Arpels ruby and diamond bracelet; inscribed on the clasp were the words "Hold Tight" and the date.

On April 2 Wallis threw an elaborate party

\* The contents of the report have been supplied by Kirk Hollingsworth, nephew of Mary Kirk Raffray, who inherited it. The actual document has disappeared recently.

at Bryanston Court for the author Harold Nicolson. In a blaze of white orchids and arum lilies she received her guests, who included the king, the American wit and broadcaster Alexander Woollcott ("She has the King like *that*," he noted in his diary), and, audaciously, the archrivals Ladies Cunard and Colefax, both of whom wanted to monopolize the king. They were furious; Wallis evidently enjoyed the black joke of bringing them together under her roof.

It was typical of her mischievousness and sheer nerve that she brought off this *soirée* trick. That month she and the king invited the Duke of Connaught, a royal great-uncle, and his friend Lady Leslie to Fort Belvedere for afternoon tea. According to a memoir by Lady Leslie's daughter Anita, the party strolled in the grounds; when the group returned to the house, Wallis's shoes were muddy from the damp soil. Without warning, she commanded the king, "Take off my dirty little shoes and bring me another pair!" To the stupefaction of the two guests, the monarch knelt down and smilingly complied.

On another occasion the king arrived with Wallis at a party at Lady Cunard's. He had been drinking Vichy water all through dinner,

but decided to add a few drops of brandy at the coffee stage. Unable to find a bottle opener, he turned to Wallis. She instructed Ernest to take his own opener from his keychain and do the job for her lover.

Frequently, the king irritated his guests by playing the bagpipes after dinner at parties at the fort. One evening, in front of a fashionable crowd, Wallis made so severe a face at him during his performance that he stopped dead, blushing like a schoolboy. It was by now clear to everyone that he no longer had a will of his own. He would even yield to Wallis's entreaties to accompany her to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The audience rippled when he arrived with Wallis and friends and took his place in Lady Cunard's box. He loathed opera and slipped out time and time again during the performance to chain-smoke cigarettes and fret while Wallis, who remained tone-deaf, gave the impression that she was enjoying the performance. Actually, her enjoyment was chiefly in noting that the audience was barely looking at the stage; most eyes were fixed firmly upon her.

The king had several meetings with the committee of the Civil List that spring, discussing

what provisions would be made for the "future queen." He ran into resistance on the matter but persisted in pressing the subject, much to everyone's irritation. Major the Hon. Alexander Hardinge and Mrs. Hardinge were determined to block the marriage at all costs. They tried to contact the king's legal adviser, Walter Monckton, to enlist him in their cause, but he was in India. They continued to maneuver behind the scenes.

The king added Sir Robert Johnson, deputy master of the Royal Mint, to his long list of enemies. Sir Robert was in charge of the British coin designs. It was understood that in each successive reign the monarch would be photographed from the side opposite to that of his predecessor. It was a tradition that went back centuries. George V had been photographed from the left. But when the king discovered that the design for his own coins was based upon a rare photograph of his right side, he flew into a temper, convinced that his right profile was hideous, and demanded that a change be made immediately. He won.

He provoked still further criticism when, on April 20, he sent a telegram to Hitler on his birthday, wishing the *führer* well for his future "happiness and welfare." Five days earlier Am-

bassador von Hoesch had died of a heart attack. He was replaced immediately by the king's and Wallis's intimate friend, the mild and bespectacled Prince Otto von Bismarck, who was acting chargé d'affaires until Ribbentrop took over that fall. It was known that Bismarck was a frequent guest at Fort Belvedere, which suggested a very serious possible breach in security.

The reason for this fear in Whitehall was clear. Day after day, from the beginning of the reign, red dispatch boxes were sent down from London to the fort, containing secret documents from British embassies all over the world relating to the international situation. These were for the eyes of the cabinet ministers and the monarch, and were not made available to anyone else. It became a scandal that the king, bored by paperwork and troubled by eyestrain, would leave crucial documents scattered about, some of them marked by the stains of tea and coffee cups. It was suspected that certain crucial information in these documents was making its way back to Berlin. Wallis was thought to be the leak. In a biography of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, by Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, the following passage appears:

About Mrs. Simpson, greater suspicions existed. She was believed to have close contact with German monarchist circles . . . she was under close scrutiny by (Sir Robert) Vansittart [Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs], and both she and the King would not have been pleased to realize that the Security Services were keeping a watching brief on her and some of her friends. The red boxes sent down to Fort Belvedere were carefully screened in the Foreign Office to ensure that nothing highly secret should go astray. Behind the public facade, behind the King's popularity, the Government had awakened to a danger that had nothing to do with any question of marriage.

In the files of the FBI in Washington a report, entitled "International Espionage behind Edward's Abdication," contains this statement:

Certain would-be State secrets were passed on to Edward, and when it was found that Ribbentrop actually received the same information, immediately Baldwin was forced to accept that the leakage had been located.

The same report categorically states that Wallis was responsible for this breach of security.

In his biography *This Man Ribbentrop*, Paul Schwarz, a member of Ribbentrop's Foreign Office staff, reported that secrets from the dispatch boxes were being widely circulated in Berlin and that materials germane to British national security and sent by British Ambassador to Germany Sir Eric Phipps, were making their way back to the German capital. Again, Schwarz seemed to imply, Wallis was responsible.

Sir Robert Vansittart, the controversial éminence grise of British Secret Intelligence, took charge. Tall, broad-shouldered, ruggedly athletic, exuding decency and warm common sense, Vansittart succeeded the very able Sir Ronald Lindsay as permanent under secretary in 1930. He was arguably the most daring, freethinking, brilliant, and piercingly perceptive of any political figure of his time other than his close friend and neighbor Winston Churchill. As John Connell wrote in his book on British diplomacy, *The Office*:

He was [capable of] swiftness of analysis . . . linked indissolubly to an equivalent swiftness in his desire for action. He was impatient if the action which he believed to be obviously necessary did not immediately and resolutely follow

upon the assessment of a situation which he had made or the advice which he had offered. This caused more timorous and less decisive men to regard him as imprudent and injudicious.

Poet, gambler, and *bon vivant*, Vansittart was a close friend and partner of Alexander Korda's; in the late 1930s, as his associate and boss in London Films, he would enlist Korda in the Secret Intelligence Service along with other German-speaking Hungarian employees of that company. Vansittart had been in the foreign service in Paris, Teheran, Cairo, and Stockholm, and he had the clearest head in London where the German menace was concerned. He was the unofficial head of the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, which was nominally run by Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair until 1939. "He was a leopard whose fate it was to be harnessed with a team of domesticated but sly and vindictive tabby-cats," Connell wrote. He was Wallis's implacable enemy from the day that he was convinced she was a Nazi collaborator.

How did Vansittart reach the conclusion that Wallis was responsible for leaking crucial documentary information to the German gov-

ernment? According to historian John Costello, the Russian secret agent Anatoly Baykalov was the source of this intelligence. Posing as a White Russian, Baykalov was part of the same set that included Wallis's dress-maker Anna Wolkoff, which would explain his knowledge of the matter. He appears to have acted as a double agent for the British. He took the information of the leak to the Soviets and also in February 1936 to J. C. C. Davidson, former chairman of the Conservative party, who now was chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Davidson in turn took the information to Vansittart, who then conveyed it to Stanley Baldwin.

Vansittart had two reliable plants in the German Embassy who could inform him when any material arrived for transmission to Germany in the diplomatic bags. Wolfgang zu Putlitz was one of these spies; later, when posted at The Hague, he would reveal the Duke of Windsor's leakage of important information on a British War Council meeting. Putlitz worked in association with another British spy, the German press attaché Iona von Ustinov, father of the actor and playwright Peter Ustinov. Nigel West wrote in his definitive book *MI 6*: "For . . . years, zu Putlitz kept Ustinov . . .

in touch with everything that took place within the German Embassy in London."

Wallis would have had to use the Italian Embassy as a conduit for the information; Baykalov determined this. What could have been her motive? Sir Eric Phipps, British ambassador in Berlin, had greatly excited the king's displeasure because of his missives and telegrams which indicated an intense dislike and mistrust of the Hitler regime. She would not have risked acting without royal authorization; it seems likely that the king himself wished this information to flow back to Germany in order to fortify opposition to Phipps and to undermine Phipps's secret policies. But this is conjecture.

On May 27 the king invited Prime Minister Baldwin to York House to meet his "future wife." Among the guests were Charles and Anne Lindbergh. Lindbergh had just returned from Germany, where he had been given a grand tour at the specific request of his friend Field Marshal Goering. Sometime after the dinner Lucy Baldwin told her husband, "Mrs. Simpson has stolen the Fairy Prince." Walter Monckton returned to London. The Hardinges

brought their influence to bear on him, but he was adamantly loyal to the king, almost certainly rejected charges of espionage against Wallis, and would only do what the king wanted. He knew that no power on earth could shake the monarch's obsessive love of Wallis. On one occasion that spring Monckton was with the monarch looking over a depressed property of the Duchy of Cornwall in London when he noticed the king staring with intense yearning out of one of the windows. He asked, "What are you looking at, Sir?" The king replied that Wallis was in that general direction. Even a brief absence from her that day was tormenting to him.

Another incident was widely discussed in London. In an effort to patch up the conflict between Wallis and his brother and sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of York, the king decided to take her to visit them at the Royal Lodge at Windsor. Wallis talked to them and at first they began to melt a little. She made a fuss over their children, the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. But then Wallis destroyed all possibility of a reconciliation. The nursery governess, Marion Crawford, recalled in her memoirs that right in front of her host and hostess and their daughters, Wallis walked

to the window and announced that the view would be greatly improved if certain trees were cut down or replanted and a part of a hill bulldozed. The recommendation was not appreciated.

On May 4, 1936, Wallis sent a long, emotional letter to Aunt Bessie, complaining of the awful strain she had been under with the king and Ernest tearing her apart for a year and a half; she wrote of how painfully difficult it was to placate and amuse two men at the same time and to fit into their separate lives, and she said she was constantly tired, nervous, and irritable. She went on that even though she, Ernest, and the king had discussed their curious relationship on a reasonably friendly basis, and even though Ernest appeared to regard his position as a cuckold with complacency, she herself could not endure much more mental and physical stress. She knew she had outgrown Ernest; if she were to give up the king, she would regret it; and should the king become romantically involved with another woman, she would cease to have the power and possessions she now enjoyed. The letter is a harshly astonishing revelation of her ambition.

During the summer of 1936 severe censorship was applied to any mention of Wallis in

England. The newspaper magnates, loyal to the king, introduced a self-imposed edict that precluded either photographs or articles which would disclose the relationship between her and the monarch. Foreign periodicals and journals were sent by their distributors to a special office where appropriate passages referring to the king and Wallis were scissored out. When the British newsweekly *Cavalcade* daringly brought out an issue covering in five columns the life of Mrs. Simpson, the issue sold very well but was finally dragged off the stands and confiscated. Nevertheless, black market copies of European magazines found their way into many homes in society and were read with much surreptitious giggling over the breakfast tables.

The king ordered the *Britannia*, the British royal family's beloved but now unseaworthy sailing yacht, ceremonially sunk in a blaze of white flowers in the English Channel. The king modified the normal twelve-month period of court mourning for his dead father by giving permission for court members to attend night-clubs and public restaurants. He had the audacity to attend the races at Ascot in mid-June, with a party that included Wallis, a breach of the protocol of mourning that few forgave him

for. Former Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald was especially furious and told Mrs. Hardinge that for Wallis to appear at the races in "an imperial conveyance" was nothing less than horrible.

That same month, a party was arranged at Argyll House in London. Artur Rubinstein was invited to play. The king grew increasingly fidgety during the Chopin recital in a crowd that included Winston Churchill, Noël Coward, the art authority Kenneth Clark, and Sir Robert and Lady Vansittart. Finally, the king could stand it no more. As Rubinstein finished the final bars of an étude, the king crossed the room in front of everyone and said, peremptorily, "We enjoyed that very much, Mr. Rubinstein," thus bringing the concert to an end. The great pianist left in a fury. The king asked Noël Coward to take over at the keyboard. Coward, somewhat embarrassed, caused the king and Wallis to laugh and clap their hands as he played and sang his famous songs "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" and "Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs. Worthington."

In an effort to forestall the king's marital plans, his opponents in the press constantly announced that he would marry this or that royal princess. Among those stated to be his choice

of bride were Princess Frederica, granddaughter of the kaiser, and Princess Alexandrine Louise, third daughter of Prince Harald of Denmark. It was with some difficulty that he was restrained from having Wallis assist him in receiving the guests at royal receptions; instead, he was aided by the Duchesses of York, Gloucester, and Kent.

By midsummer all confidential documents were being withheld from the king and were not even passed from the Foreign Office as far as Major Hardinge. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was responsible for this restriction, along with Sir Robert Vansittart. Eden had no time for the king, and the feeling was mutual. The monarch resented Eden's application of sanctions against Italy for the slaughter of Abyssinia. In his memoir of 1936 Eden mentioned the king only once. As it turned out, there was a change of the political winds that summer. The government increasingly felt that sanctions as recommended by Eden were useless in restricting Italy's power and were only driving Mussolini firmly into the Hitler camp, as the king had indeed predicted. The cabinet, at a succession of meetings, reached the decision that the sanctions policy should be concluded.

The matter was passed to the Privy Council, which met immediately with the king to put the cabinet decision into effect. The king was, of course, delighted to sign the Order in Council at the end of the formal meeting.

Eden, still gravely concerned over the appeasement of Mussolini, and distraught that no punishment of the Italian dictator would be permitted by the government of which he was a member, had two alternatives at this stage. Either he could accept the majority decision of the cabinet or, if he felt sufficiently strongly about it, he could resign. Unquestionably, he should have resigned, but, as was revealed later in his career, he tended to be morally irresolute in a crisis. It was not until 1938 that he did finally resign over the official appeasement policy. The Cabinet was instrumental in arranging the abrogation of Mediterranean naval pacts with Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia that were supposed to have ensured collective security against Mussolini. At the same time, Mussolini and Hitler had drawn together in what would turn out to be a fatally dangerous alliance. And just to be sure that Italy had unlimited power in the Mediterranean, where it was secretly involved in a submarine war with the Soviet

Union,\* the king planned another political vacation in Europe.

While the travel preparations were under way, an extraordinary incident took place. On July 16 the king attended a military review in Hyde Park, surveying on horseback a fine array of guardsmen in their scarlet uniforms. He reminded them of their heroic traditions, which went back 250 years to the period in which their leader and patron was the Duke of Marlborough. He spoke of the horrors of war, encouraging his troops in their hopes that they would never suffer from fire and gunshot as their predecessors had. "With all my heart I hope, and indeed I pray, that never again will our age and generation be called upon to face such stern and terrible days. Humanity cries out for peace and assurance of peace," he said. It was a ceremony that took place only once every fifteen years.

In vivid sunshine the battalions marched past the king. The monarch rode behind the bandsmen at the head of the brigades of guards for the journey around Hyde Park Corner to Buckingham Palace. As the parade moved un-

\* The Italian submarines were disguised as Spanish.

der Wellington Arch, a man in the second row of spectators raised a gun and pointed it directly at the king. A policeman's horse backed into the man's line of fire, and he impetuously tossed the unused revolver under the hooves of the king's horse. "Damn fool!" the king exclaimed as someone screamed, "Get the killer, don't let him go!" Three policemen apprehended the would-be assassin and hustled him off. Grim but calm, the king continued his ride to the palace.

It turned out that the assailant was one Jerome Bannigan, an Irish resident of Glasgow, who used the pseudonym George Andrew McMahon. A disgruntled alcoholic of unstable temperament, Bannigan had already been sentenced to twelve months in prison for the libeling of two police officers whom he accused of blackmail. The conviction had been quashed by the Court of Criminal Appeal. He was allegedly distressed because a magazine he edited, entitled *The Human Gazette*, had been emasculated in an act of censorship by the authorities. He claimed in a rambling story that he had been directed to kill the king by a political group that was Nazi in origin. This absurdity was treated with contempt, and after a brief

trial he was sentenced to serve twelve months in jail.\*

On July 21 a storm drenched the guests at the first garden party at Buckingham Palace in six months. The king canceled the receiving line until the following day. Four days after that he sailed for France on the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress* to dedicate the Canadian war memorial at Vimy Ridge. In a solemn ceremony he unveiled the expensive white-stone monument before 50,000 veterans, and, in a speech worked on extensively by his friend Winston Churchill, he spoke eloquently of the glorious dead and once more appealed for lasting peace.

He planned to spend some time on the Riviera at the Château de l'Horizon, home of the former Broadway star Maxine Elliott, before undertaking the Mediterranean cruise. The Popular Front's left-wing Léon Blum had become premier of France after an interregnum that followed the collapse of the Laval government the previous January. It was feared that certain Communist elements attaching themselves to the Blum administration might at-

\* It is possible that Bannigan was backed by the IRA, which was at that time under Communist control.

tempt to kill the king, and he was advised by the Foreign Office to bypass the Riviera. Instead, he completed the charter of the 1391-ton *Nahlin*, luxury yacht of the eccentric millionairess Lady Yule, who had a house full of stuffed animals and an animal graveyard in her garden. Under the command of Captain Doyle, the yacht would travel through much of the eastern Mediterranean, where the Italians and the Soviets were engaged in their secret war; the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* at 4700 tons was too large to voyage up the narrow inlets of Dalmatia.

It was a dangerous time to travel. The Spanish Civil War had broken out. The situation in the Balkans was potentially volatile. Yet nothing would stop the king in his determined effort to embark upon yet another misadventure in politics in the guise of a holiday trip. He was still determined to appease Italy, despite the fact that that nation's imperial policy was still flagrantly opposed to British interests in the Mediterranean. Once again, in keeping with foreign policy, his clumsy, amateurish, but on the whole well-meaning concern was to secure the permanency of the trade route to India through the Suez Canal; shortly before his departure he entertained Farouk, the teenage heir

to the Egyptian throne, in order to receive reassurances vis-à-vis Suez. He also was pleased to approve Baldwin's crucial appointment of his old friend Sir Samuel Hoare as first lord of the Admiralty. This was no idle choice. He needed Hoare to help him secure Italy's permanent co-operation and freedom to continue its anti-Soviet submarine war and to reinforce Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus. Moreover, the king considered the heavy armament installations in Yugoslavia of the British company Vickers. In Greece he could contact King George, who owed much to Britain, and General John Metaxas, newly arisen dictator and Mussolini admirer. He would also meet with Kemal Ataturk, dictator of Turkey, making sure that the Ottoman army and navy would be allied to Britain for the indefinite future.\* There was fear that the Turks might be building or even floating submarines to assist their allies the Russians against Italy.

As usual, the king flew to Calais, while Wallis and the rest of the party came by Channel

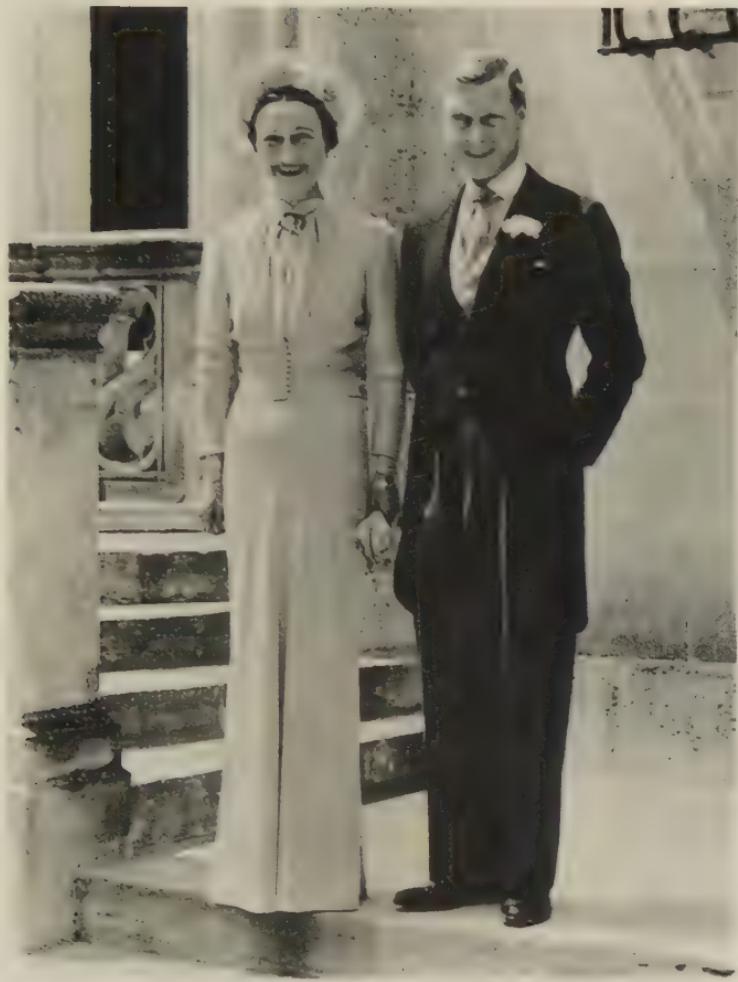
\* Stories that he was reluctant to visit Turkey and was forced to do so by Sir Percy Loraine, British ambassador to Ankara, cannot be substantiated by documentation.

steamer. On this occasion the king used one of his hereditary titles: Duke of Lancaster. The royal party took the *Orient Express*, again in a private car supplied by Mussolini, via Salzburg in Austria, arriving at the Yugoslav frontier at Jessenice late in the afternoon. The travelers were met by Prince Regent Paul and by John Balfour, British chargé d'affaires in Belgrade. The king stepped out to chat with the regent and Balfour. Sitting in the private car, Wallis was surprised to find it was being shunted around a siding to join the royal train. There was grave concern that Edward and Wallis would be murdered either by Communists or by Croat terrorists. Paul's father, King Alexander, had fallen under the assassin's bullet in Marseilles. When Edward and Wallis broke the journey briefly to drive out into the country in the royal car to have tea with Paul and the Princess Olga, who did not approve of Wallis, the chauffeur, on instructions, drove at a frantic pace, scattering chickens and goats in every direction. The authorities were afraid that if the royal party was in a slow car, the Croats might strike.

The purpose of the meeting was not merely social. The timing had been carefully thought out, and the meeting had been preplanned, de-

spite statements in both Wallis's and the king's memoirs that it was the result of Paul's insistence on interrupting their journey south. Two months earlier Dr. Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, Hitler's leading economist and financial wizard, had been in conference with Prince Paul on the matter of massive armaments contracts; at the same time Mussolini had been in close touch with the prince to achieve similar political and economic relations. As a result, when King Edward and Wallis arrived in Yugoslavia, half that country's exports and imports were the result of German and Italian deals. It is clear that again the King of England wanted to be reassured that the Fascist alliances established in Bucharest would not affect the British balance of power in Europe, especially in the Mediterranean basin. Prince Paul had no difficulty in giving that reassurance.

Wallis and the king then proceeded to the Dalmatian coast, joining the *Nahlin* at Sibenik. The weather was perfect, and the yacht, extensively refitted to royal instructions and freshly painted white from stem to stern, made a magnificent sight in the harbor against a background of vivid blue sea and sky. Twenty thousand people in traditional costume greeted the royal party as the group made its way by auto-



The duke and duchess on  
their wedding day at the  
Château de Candé, June 3,  
1937. (*Central Press/  
Pictorial Parade*)

The Duchess of Windsor,  
photographed by Cecil  
Beaton. (*Pictorial Parade*)





The duke and duchess visiting Venice.  
(*L'Illustration* / Sygma)

Berchtesgaden, October 1937: the duke and duchess beaming at their host, Adolf Hitler.  
(Popperfoto / Pictorial Parade)





The suite at the Meurice, Paris, 1938.  
(author's collection)

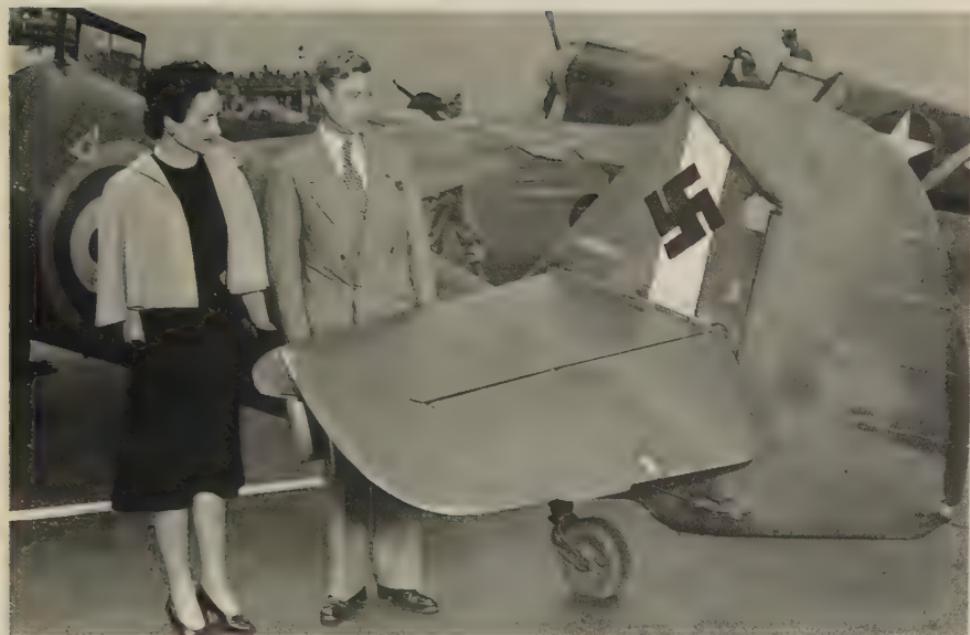


At home near Paris. (Pictorial Parade)

The duchess in Bermuda  
on the way to the  
Bahamas, where the duke  
became governor in 1940.  
(UPI/ Bettmann Newsphotos)



Political enemies meet. The duchess in  
sable shaking hands with first lady  
Eleanor Roosevelt in Washington,  
October 1941.  
(UPI/ Bettmann Newsphotos)



The duke and duchess inspecting a German Messerschmitt at LaGuardia Airport, New York City, June 1942. (UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)



Sir Harry Oakes with his wife, Lady Eunice. (Keystone Press Agency, London)



Harold Christie, murderer of Sir Harry Oakes. (Topham Picture Library, Kent, England)



The duke talking with his beloved sister, Mary, the Princess Royal, in March 1953.

(S&G from *Pictorial Parade*)



The duchess brushing back a stray lock of hair for the duke, who is holding their pet pug on the liner *United States* on their way to Europe in May 1953. At a press conference on board the vessel, the duke announced that they were not going to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.  
(UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)



The duchess, flanked by the Comte de Bernadotte and Elsa Maxwell. (*Pictorial Parade*)



The duke and duchess (at right) at the Palm Beach Polo Club, West Palm Beach, March 1955.  
(Bert Morgan/ *Pictorial Parade*)



The duke, in false mustache, with the duchess while being cheered by 700 Germans at a Munich beer hall, August 1956. After three pints of beer, the duke jumped on a chair and gave a speech in fluent German, with the German audience pounding their stone beer mugs in approval. (*London Express/Pictorial Parade*)



The duke in a Scottish tartan mask, complete with earring, at a Paris society ball given by the Baroness Cabrol. (*Pictorial Parade*)

mobile to the docks. Stories about Wallis had been appearing regularly in the local press; everyone knew she was the king's mistress. Cries of "Long live the king!" rang through the warm and humid air as the white vessel slipped from her moorings and moved out into the glittering sea.

During the next three days politics was set aside as the royal party, with two destroyers as escorts, enjoyed small Adriatic ports and experienced the visual pleasures of the mountainous, magical coast. Wallis would never forget one particular evening when the *Nahlin* was moored at a pier directly under the shadow of a looming mountain peak. Several thousand peasants came to greet the yacht, carrying torches in a long procession that wound down the cliffside paths, while the sound of singing filled the night. At Dubrovnik another great crowd surrounded Wallis and the king as they went shopping, crying, "Long live love!" Despite the heat and humidity, the closeness of the cabins, and the lack of wind to aid the yacht's passage, Wallis was enjoying her role as surrogate queen, and the king was overjoyed to be giving her a taste of what it meant to be a royal person.

Among the guests on the cruise were Duff

and Diana Cooper; they had joined the yachting party en route. Neither was particularly enamored of Wallis, nor was she of them. They found it sinisterly prophetic that Wallis was already wearing exact copies of the two crosses worn by the king on a gold necklet on her wrist. Diana noted in her memoirs that the couple occupied the main suite (actually, a converted library from which all the books had been removed) at the bow of the vessel, while the numerous guests were crammed into the stern.

The monarch insisted on behaving like an ordinary tourist. As the *Nahlin* nosed through the Corinth Canal, he stood stripped down to shorts on deck, causing hundreds of camera shots, as well as severe and puritanical criticism in London. King George of Greece came aboard for two hours to meet Wallis; related to the British royal family, he had known Edward on and off for many years. Then the couple went ashore with George to meet his British mistress, Mrs. Jones. The situation in Greece was very tense. Only two weeks before, General John Metaxas had seized power in Athens, appointing himself premier and minister of army, navy, air, and foreign affairs. He had cut off all telephone and telegraph communications, cen-

sored the press, and sent police to break up labor organizations. In a few days he would dissolve Parliament. Both he and King George had cemented relations with Italy and Germany; again, it was important that King Edward receive assurances that British interests would not be affected by the new regime. He did.

The royal party continued to Athens, where the king and Wallis walked their feet off exploring the Acropolis and the Parthenon. While Wallis shopped, the king and his minister of war, Alfred Duff Cooper, visited with General Metaxas for two hours of afternoon tea. According to a survey of the tour, which was made by the distinguished American magazine *Living Age*, they arranged during the course of the meeting a substantial British loan to Greece through Hambro's Bank, which in effect helped to put Britain more firmly in the Hitler-Mussolini camp.

Back on board, Lady Diana Cooper witnessed a bizarre scene. The king suddenly sank to his knees to drag the hem of Wallis's evening gown from under the foot of a chair. Instead of expressing her gratitude, Wallis stared at the monarch and snapped out: "Well, that's the *maus* extraordinary performance I've ever

seen!" And then, to the astonishment of all concerned, she launched a sharp attack on the king, criticizing the way he had handled the Greek monarch and his mistress. Diana wrote in a letter, "Wallis is wearing very, very badly. Her commonness and Becky Sharpishness irritate." It was not the first time Wallis had been compared to the heroine of *Vanity Fair*. Diana noted in her diaries that Wallis kept picking on the king quite coldly, with boredom and irritation. Later, the engineer of the yacht wrote an unpublished book about the cruise which indicated how bad tempered and restless both the king and Wallis were and how they constantly badgered and bullied the crew.

"The good ship *Swastika*," as Malcolm Muggeridge later dubbed the *Nahlin*, now resumed its journey, hitting a bridge on the way. On September 3 Wallis watched, laughing, as the king was spilled into the water when his small rowing dinghy capsized in a heavy swell. Picnicking, rock climbing, collecting shells, and swimming in the warm and still sunlit sea, the royal party proceeded to Turkey, where the group received an especially tumultuous welcome. The Turkish destroyers *Adapepe* and *Kojaopepe* met the royal yacht off Imbros at 8 a.m. on September 4. General Altay of the

Turkish army came aboard by launch with a welcome message from the Turkish dictator, Kemal Ataturk. Turkish destroyers joined the two British destroyer convoy ships accompanying the royal cruise up to the landing stage at Seddul Bahr. Wallis and the king spent two hours walking through the British and Australian graveyard at Gallipoli. This caused much annoyance in Australia and New Zealand because many in those countries blamed the British, and in particular Winston Churchill, for the inefficiency that sacrificed the Anzac troops in the battle against the Turks in that region during World War I.

At noon the *Nahlin* anchored off the Dalma Bagtche Palace. The king and Wallis were greeted by Kemal Ataturk, along with the premier, the foreign minister, and the Turkish ambassador to the Court of St. James. The royal party entered open automobiles and drove at headlong speed past cheering crowds at the landing stage to the British Embassy for a meeting with Ambassador Sir Percy Loraine. Again, what seemed to be merely a courtesy visit was crucial in terms of securing British interests in the region. After several months of negotiations, the League of Nations had at last agreed to permit the Turks to overcome post-

World War I agreements and to refortify the Bosphorus. In view of Turkey's recently cemented political and economic alliances with the Soviet Union, and Turkey's proximity to Egypt and the Suez Canal, the situation was felt to be potentially dangerous to British interests. During his meeting with the Turkish dictator, the king succeeded in acquiring the contracts for the Dardanelles refortifications for Britain, right under the nose of Hitler's Dr. Schacht, as well as outfoxing Skoda, the Czechoslovakian company that was believed to be in Moscow's pocket.

That night Ataturk put on a Venetian regatta for the royal party, with the Turkish fleet lit from stem to stern, and a display of fireworks that illuminated the dome of Santa Sophia in a blaze of multicolored lights. It was an unforgettable night to cap an unforgettable visit. Wallis and the king proceeded to Vienna via Bulgaria, where they had a brief visit with King Boris, another monarch under the thumbs of Hitler and Mussolini. They were aboard the royal train supplied by the Turkish government for their exclusive use. Happy as schoolboys, the two kings together manned the engine. Wallis and the king were met at Vienna by a royal automobile especially trans-

ported from London. As always, they checked into their favorite hostelry, the Hotel Bristol. The American hostess and columnist Elsa Maxwell was present in the lobby when they walked in with an immense number of suitcases and trunks. Miss Maxwell noticed Wallis's fixed, purposeful stare and hard, determined manner.

On the morning of September 9 Wallis and the king visited the Vienna Fair, lingering at the British-Indian Pavilion. They proceeded to visit President Miklas and Chancellor von Schuschnigg. The political situation in Austria was exceedingly volatile. In June Hitler and von Schuschnigg had signed alliance agreements with guaranteed mutual political association, and Italy had concurred with the arrangement. This caused widespread discontent among the Jews and Socialists in the country, and on September 10, the second day of Wallis's and the king's visit, there was a riot in which parts of Vienna were set afire by militant rebels. Before, King Edward could always use the excuse that he was in league with von Schuschnigg in order to avoid an alliance between the Austrians, the Italians, and Hitler. But now he was lending his personal support to a government that was totally committed to

Hitler. At the same time, he seemed to find nothing untoward in the fact that he and Wallis visited one of the most prominent figures in the Jewish financial community, Baron Eugene Rothschild, and the baron's American wife, Kitty, at their Schloss Enzesfeld residence. To increase the irony, he and Wallis that night attended a full-scale performance of Wagner's masterpiece, *Die Götterdämmerung*, which was Hitler's favorite opera; they were accompanied by the composer's daughter, the pro-Hitler Winifred Wagner. The king also hunted chamois, visited Heinrich Neumann (the Jewish professor who had refused to attend Hitler) for the king's ear trouble, which was exacerbated by his ocean swimming, and appeared at a public Turkish bath with an embarrassed David Storrier of Scotland Yard and six leading Vienna detectives; all eight men disported themselves in the nude, with guns, before the astonished patrons.

Wallis and the king returned to the opera house to see Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*; on this occasion the king spent most of the performance outside the royal box smoking impatiently. He was more comfortable dining at the famous restaurant The Three Hussars, re-

visiting the beloved Rotter Bar, and enjoying the waltzes at the Bristol.

After a week-long stay, the couple took a train to Zurich, whence the king flew to London, and Wallis and the rest of the party continued on the express. George Weller, the *New York Times* correspondent in Athens, wrote on September 6:

In Edward's visits [in the Mediterranean] four nations envisaged a new strong British policy. They asked themselves whether a synthesis of Edward's sincerity and Hitler's zeal might not be a better protection than the League of Nations. They might not be greatly averse to being dominated by the British and Germans.

Weller had put his finger correctly on the main purpose of the voyage of the *Nahlin*.

Back in London, Wallis and Ernest finally parted company. Ernest moved to his club, and Wallis took a room at Claridges Hotel. She had a meeting with her solicitor, Theodore Goddard, who had already begun divorce proceedings. Goddard informed her that he had decided not to have the case heard in London because the calendar was so filled that it might

be a year before the divorce could be granted. Instead, he settled upon the Suffolk town of Ipswich. Wallis would be represented by the celebrated barrister Norman Birkett, K.C.

The king invited Wallis and Herman and Katherine Rogers, who had been with them on one leg of the *Nahlin* cruise, to stay with him at Balmoral Castle. Among the other guests were the Duke and Duchess of Kent, Lord and Lady Mountbatten, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland. Canceling a scheduled opening of the infirmary of Aberdeen Hospital, the king disappeared from the castle to drive to Aberdeen Station to pick up Wallis and the Rogerses. The train was late; despite his disguise of enormous motoring goggles, everyone recognized the monarch except a policeman who reprimanded him for leaving his car in the "No Parking" zone. Wallis had never been to Balmoral before. The castle made a pretty sight, with its turrets and gables, its hundred-foot tower, and its spectacular view of mountains, forests, and the River Dee. Inside, it was an amusing royal folly, with its dark pitch-pine and tartan-covered furniture, tartan curtains, and tartan wall hangings. A life-size statue of

Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, stood at the foot of the grand staircase.

Wallis seemed to rejoice in the fact that she occupied rooms that had originally been used by Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra, and Queen Mary. The incongruity evidently amused her as she issued forth in shorts each morning with the king and began shopping in the local village of Crathie. While the royal party went off deerstalking, Wallis walked through the countryside admiring the autumn-tinted leaves of the forest trees. After dinner each night, five bagpipe players paraded around the table, led by the king in Black Watch tartans, tootling away. Movies were shown, including *Strike Me Pink*, starring Wallis's favorite comedian, Eddie Cantor, and Wallis provided an additional American touch by making the guests three-decker toasted club sandwiches.

Wallis was still unpopular with the staff. It was known that she had insisted on the sackings and on pensioning off the old retainers. Her Americanization of the kitchen menus did not please the employees. She was not concerned.

She returned in a good mood to London while the king held his first Privy Council out-

side London at Balmoral. At the same time plans were well advanced for his coronation, which was to take place on May 12, 1937. Hotels were completely booked along the 6-mile parade route. Department stores scheduled hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of decorations. Lloyd's of London was busy with the contingency of a postponement, guaranteeing various firms against risk. It was announced that Westminster Abbey would be closed to the public, starting from January 4, to allow the Office of Works to prepare the ancient edifice for the ceremonies. The abbey organ had already been taken apart.

On her return to London at the beginning of October, Wallis sent congratulations to Sir Oswald Mosley and his new wife, Diana, sister of the Hitler-fancier Unity Mitford, upon the occasion of their wedding in Dr. Goebbels's house in Berlin, with Hitler in attendance. After a brief stay at Claridges, Wallis moved into a regency house located at 16 Cumberland Terrace, which was Crown property, subleased from the tenant, who would be going on a world cruise. Enormous, sumptuously furnished, the Nash-designed house had a huge upstairs drawing room overlooking Regent's Park that Wallis filled from end to end with

her favorite flowers. She began to refurbish rooms with the help of Lady Mendl. Simultaneously, Neville Chamberlain had arranged to lease his home in Eaton Square to Ribbentrop.

As Wallis moved into Cumberland Terrace on October 7, under the closest surveillance by the Secret Intelligence Service, she looked up at the roof, where stood figures representing Love, Justice, Wisdom, and Victory. That same day Queen Mary, who had been at Buckingham Palace for twenty-five years, symbolically left, bolt upright, staunch, and seemingly unmoved, in the back of her car for her new home at Marlborough House. The Associated Press announced that, as of that date, the king had given \$1 million worth of jewels to Wallis and that \$50,000 worth of silver fox furs had been imported by a British company from Julius Greene of New York as his gift to the royal mistress. On October 11 the king officially took up residence for the first time at Buckingham Palace. He hated the endless marble corridors and enormous gloomy rooms, setting up his private headquarters in the eighteenth-century Belgian Suite. Furnished with Louis XIV and Chippendale antiques, the suite overlooked the East Terrace and the palace gardens. From Paris the king, through the good offices of the

still loyal Ambassador, Sir George Clerk, acquired Maxim's reigning chef. Summoned to his first audience, M. Legros was instructed to prepare the simplest menus for Wallis and the king. The monarch and Wallis would have toast and tea with lemon and a one-egg omelette for breakfast, tea and an apple for lunch, and grilled steak or sole with melon and cheese for dinner. Legros threw up his hands in despair.

The king called in the proprietors of the London newspapers and succeeded in obtaining from them the promise that Wallis's imminent divorce hearing at Ipswich would be treated with the utmost discretion in the press. However, the American press was unrestricted, and by the second week of October every hotel in the Suffolk town was crammed with reporters from the major American cities. As a result, representatives of European newspapers had to find rooms in nearby villages.

During her brief stay at Cumberland Terrace before moving to Suffolk, Wallis was under royal protection. On October 20 she went to her hairdresser, Antoine, of Dover Street. Inspector Storrier had placed her brand-new Buick, the exact copy of the monarch's that had been ordered in January, behind Cumberland

Terrace; but this feeble attempt to hide her departure from the house failed, and crowds were waiting when she emerged. She was followed by car and bicycle to the hairdressing salon, and when she ran, looking flushed and uncomfortable, into the car to make the journey to her bank, the inspector had to clear the sidewalk for her. That night Wallis moved to a cottage at Felixstowe, near Ipswich, an uninspiring residence overlooking a pebble-strewn beach and a slate-gray sea. The king disappeared from a shooting party at Sandringham to make her welcome, leaving his brother-in-law the Earl of Harewood and Sir Samuel Hoare to continue without him. Wallis's companions were her old friends George and Kitty Hunter, whom she had known from her earliest days in London and whose Mayfair flat she and the king had used for romantic evenings. Wallis was under the constant guard of David Storrier. The king visited her one more time during that difficult week of waiting.\*

\* Simultaneously, an anonymous representative of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin engaged the services of Washington, D.C., attorney Raymond Neudecker to investigate the records of Wallis's 1927 divorce from Win Spencer. Evidently, the prime minister, who was already opposed to any thought of the king's marrying Wallis, was determined to find some evidence

On October 23 the king went to London to have dinner with his mother at Marlborough House. He found her quietly distraught at the prospect of his marriage to Wallis should the divorce from Ernest Simpson go through. It proved impossible to sway her in the matter. The hearing in Ipswich was set for Saturday the twenty-fourth. Wallis had a sleepless night on Friday. She paced the floor of her room at Felixstowe, tortured by many thoughts. She was not happy about losing Ernest; nor was she happy at the prospect of being forced to become queen. She would have been content to have retained the role of royal mistress, like Mrs. Fitzherbert in the reign of King George IV or Mrs. Keppel in the reign of King Edward VII. In her reckless pursuit of power, position, and money, in her cool, dominating exercise of power, she had gotten out of her depth. Where was this plan that she had engineered going to lead her?

To prolong Wallis's agony, her case was postponed from Saturday until Tuesday, the

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of irregularities in the 1927 hearings. However, Aubrey Weaver, her attorney of the time at Front Royal, succeeded in having Judge Peck Alexander of Warrenton seal the files on the case. It is possible Wallis prearranged this. The files remained inaccessible until the present author obtained them in 1986.

twenty-seventh of October. The judge had too full a calendar of minor malfeasances, including rabbit poaching, to deal with her all-important matter, and, suffering from a bad cough and cold and the worst of tempers, Mr. Justice Hawke was in no mood to set her case out of the natural sequence. While Wallis went through the torments of the damned at Felixstowe, the Ipswich bars overflowed with heavy-drinking reporters who were becoming increasingly irritable and frustrated. At last, the time arrived: 2:15 on the afternoon of October 27, 1936. Mr. Justice Hawke was ushered in by two military trumpeters playing a fanfare on their silver instruments. Ironically, the musicians were drawn from the band of the Cold-stream Guards, in which Ernest Simpson had served in World War I. A uniformed marshal in black and scarlet announced the bewigged judge, who was coughing and blowing his nose into an outsize handkerchief. Wallis, looking extremely pale and exhausted in a small navy-blue felt hat and double-breasted coat and skirt of matching blue, made her way from the Buick through the crowd to the witness stand. She was accompanied by Norman Birkett, in his famous shabby wig and enormous horn-rimmed glasses, and his "second," the chubby,

red-faced Walter Frampton. Ernest was not present, nor was he represented by counsel; his solicitor, North Lewis, was, however, present.

Hawke, looking grim, his mouth a hard, resistant line in his red and heavily jowled face, spoke in a muffled voice for the next several minutes through his linen handkerchief and a blizzard of coughs and sneezes. This was scarcely helpful to Wallis's already frazzled nerves. She stood with her right blue kid glove already removed to take the oath. Her American accent struck an incongruous note in the drab, ultra-British courtroom. Although her hands were kept firmly from trembling by her will, she betrayed her tension in a characteristic gesture, flicking her tongue around her mouth.

Under oath, questioned by her counsel, she told of her happy marriage with Ernest until the fall of 1934, when he would leave for weekends. She described an episode that took place on Christmas day, 1934, in which she found a note on her dressing table in a woman's handwriting. She didn't say what was in it, and it was handed to the judge. It was an almost certainly manufactured two-page letter from Mary Raffray thanking Ernest for a gift of roses. Wallis said it had caused her "considerable distress."

She went on to say that at Easter of the present year, she had found a letter on identical blue stationery intended for her husband. She improbably asserted that Mary Raffray had written this love note to Ernest from the south of France and a simple letter to Wallis and had "accidentally" put them into the wrong envelopes.

Two waiters who had worked at the Hotel de Paris in Bray stated that on July 22 and July 23, 1936, they had served breakfast in bed to Ernest and a woman. That woman was variously described in later reports as Mary Raffray and a professional corespondent. Norman Birkett stood and asked the judge for a decree nisi. Hawke, visibly in a bad temper, had interrupted Wallis's testimony several times for no particular reason except his obvious distaste for her. He did not respond immediately to Birkett's request. Wallis cast the barrister an anxious glance. "I assume what your Lordship has in mind," said Birkett. "What is it I have in mind?" the judge snapped. "That this is ordinary hotel evidence," Birkett said. "But the lady's name has been divulged in the petition to My Lord, and notice was served on her." The judge then said, "I suppose I must come to the conclusion that there was adultery in

this case. Very well, decree nisi." It would be six months more before there was a decree absolute.

Wallis, surrounded by police who had been sent on royal instructions from Scotland Yard to shield her from the photographers, walked nervously and quickly down the stairs and into her car. The ordeal had taken less than nineteen minutes. She hadn't even had to face an audience in the public gallery. The king had had it cleared. He had not instructed the newspaper owners in vain. There was scarcely a mention of the granting of the divorce decree in the British press. The king, who was at Buckingham Palace that night, called Wallis to congratulate her.\*

That night, the king presented a pleased Wallis with an engagement ring. She had heard of the fabled Mogul Emerald, one of the finest stones of its kind, whose provenance went back to the ancient rulers of India. She had to have it, and the king had contacted the great jeweler, Jacques Cartier, in Paris to obtain it for

\* By a bizarre coincidence, on exactly the same day Win Spencer was divorced by his second wife, Miriam, in San Diego, California. She charged him with cruelty, desertion, drunkenness, and breaking up the furniture in their home.

her. Cartier had undertaken a worldwide search, which led him and his spies to Bagh-dad. There, a syndicate was prepared to sell the stone for a substantial price. It was brought to London by courier after being exquisitely set by the Cartier specialists. According to one version of the story then in circulation, the king declared that the price was too high and that he would pay only half of it. Whereupon Cartier withdrew the emerald, cut it in half, and presented the smaller stone to the monarch.

Wallis returned to Cumberland Terrace, which had been prepared for her by her cook and housemaid. The movers, Carter Patterson, had brought over much of her furniture from Bryanston Court, including many of her things from China; in addition, the king had sent over many royal possessions including sumptuous furnishings, mirrors, bed linen, china, and silverware. That night Wallis dined with the king at her home. He told her of a very unsettling incident that had taken place. A few days before the divorce, Prime Minister Baldwin had turned up at Fort Belvedere in his tiny black car and, after much meaningless talk, had gotten down to business and asked the monarch to persuade Wallis to abandon the proceedings.

Wallis was appalled. Not only did she not intend to marry the king, but she was, for all her boldness, not prepared for a full-scale confrontation and conflict with the prime minister of England. Little did she foresee the storm that lay immediately ahead.

# ABDICTION

The king telephoned his friend William Randolph Hearst at a castle in Wales and informed the newspaper tycoon that he would marry Wallis on June 8, 1937; Wallis was not at all happy about the announcement in Hearst's *New York American* on October 26. Since she disliked Buckingham Palace as much as the king did, they spent almost every night together at Fort Belvedere. Meanwhile, the clampdown on news about the couple continued. The king's friends in Berlin were cooperative: Dr. Goebbels made sure that there was no mention whatever of the delicate matter in the German press. However, the American reporters followed Wallis constantly.

Wallis was in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery to see the king open his first Parliament. He addressed his audience directly from the throne. His speech reviewed events and legislation during the past session. He referred to the coronation, the Imperial Conference, the treaty of alliance with Egypt, the International Conference at Montreux, the tragic events in Spain, the grave concern caused by hostilities between Japan and China, the bilateral naval agreements between England and Germany, and the strengthening of the defense forces. He also mentioned the continued growth of trade, employment problems, the Physical Training and Recreation Act, progress in slum clearance, improved conditions of work in factories, defense loans, and the subsidies to shipping. He announced he would proceed immediately to India after the ceremonies and would repeat the lavish Delhi Durbar in which his parents had been proclaimed Emperor and Empress of India in 1911. This was clearly a symbolic revelation of his continuing concern with empire; it tacitly reaffirmed the views of enlightened commentators that his main concern in appeasing Mussolini and Hitler was to keep open the traditional trade routes to the east.

Count Grandi recalls:

At a ceremony connected with the opening of Parliament, I stood talking to the King and to the Archbishop of Canterbury. As I walked in, I heard people applauding me. The Archbishop said to me, "You do realize, Sir, the applause is for your person and not for the country you represent." To which I replied, "But I am not a person, I am my country and its flag." To which, the King then responded, "Well said! Well said!"

This publicly stated expression of support for Mussolini was discreetly left unmentioned by the ever-loyal British press. Grandi continues, "The Prince of Wales reassured me, 'There will never be a war between Italy and England.' "

An ominous rainstorm swept away all plans for the procession of the monarch from Buckingham Palace to Parliament and back again. The king celebrated the occasion by sending a 4-foot-high basket of flowers to Wallis, composed of her beloved white chrysanthemums, pink and red roses, and sprays of autumn leaves. It arrived by the truck of a company granted the royal warrant displaying the lion and the unicorn and was followed an hour later

by an identical truck with a supply of liquor and nonalcoholic drinks. By this stage the king was probably beyond caring whether anybody noticed or photographed these conveyances or not.

He was almost certainly equally indifferent to the fact that people might notice the house Wallis occupied was being furnished bit by bit with silver, pictures, mirrors, and even china from Buckingham Palace and Fort Belvedere. It is questionable whether the king had the right to make presents of these family heirlooms to Wallis or anyone else. Later, many of these items would be removed to his and Wallis's residences in France. Simultaneously, records show that he had paid jewelers over £100,000 of his savings from the Duchy of Cornwall to supply Wallis with her beloved gems. There were those who felt that this extravagance was in direct contradiction of his apparent concern for the sufferings of the British working class in the depths of the depression.

On November 6 Wallis caused a ripple in the audience at Covent Garden when, in emeralds, black satin, and green-and-gold brocade, she sat with the Channons, Lady Diana Cooper, and Sir Victor Warrender, former

vice-chamberlain and comptroller of King George V's household, in Emerald Cunard's box. She seemed unabashed by the attention. That week was saddened by the departure to Berlin of Prince Otto and Princess Ann-Mari von Bismarck; the farewell parties went on and on. Hitler had decided to replace the prince with Ribbentrop, probably influenced by the fact that Bismarck was still under constant surveillance by the Secret Intelligence Service and Sir Robert Vansittart.

Aunt Bessie arrived in November to give Wallis moral support. On November 12 the king went to Portland harbor to inspect the home fleet from the decks of the flagship *Nelson*. Floods plunged the royal train into two feet of water, and the driver at the wheel of the royal Buick could barely plough through the drenched, badly drained streets of the seaside town. Rain poured down all afternoon as the king boarded the aircraft carrier *Courageous* and made the inspections, soaked to the skin, refusing both raincoat and umbrella. He returned to Fort Belvedere in a good mood on the night of the thirteenth. He embraced Aunt Bessie and Wallis only to be called away by a couriered mes-

sage from Buckingham Palace. He did not disclose its contents to Wallis until the following afternoon. The note was from Alexander Hardinge. Hardinge issued a dire warning. He said that there was only a matter of days before the press would break its promise of silence on the subject of Wallis. He went on to state that Prime Minister Baldwin and members of the cabinet were meeting that day to discuss the situation and that they might resign. It would be difficult for the king to form another government; the only remaining alternative would be a dissolution of Parliament and a general election, resulting in considerable damage to the Crown. It would be best, to avoid this circumstance, if Wallis were asked to go abroad.

The Hardinges had been plotting this maneuver from the very beginning. The king responded with anger. When Wallis said she would be happy to leave the country, he told her she would do no such thing and said that nothing would stop him from marrying her. She begged him to change his mind. He would not. He said to her that if the government would not approve the marriage, he would be ready to leave the throne. She began to cry. She told him it was madness to think along those lines. He was adamant. He would imme-

diately consult with Sir Samuel Hoare and Duff Cooper, and he would summon the prime minister. Wallis agreed to stay. It was a decision she lived to regret.

On November 16 the king left for a tour of the south Wales coalfields, one of the grimmest areas of the British Isles, where severe unemployment and poverty had existed for many years. Welcomed wherever he went, possessed of a burning concern to improve the local conditions, he greatly upset his cabinet by making the public statement, "Something should be done." Not only were kings discouraged from doing such things as dabbling in international politics and marrying twice-divorced women, they were not supposed to express their opinions to their ministers in the matter of social reform.

While the king was in south Wales on November 18, Wallis received an unexpected invitation from Esmond Harmsworth to lunch at Claridges. Harmsworth was the son of Lord Rothermere, millionaire owner of the London *Daily Mail*.

Harmsworth suggested to Wallis that she should abandon any idea of being queen; she

reassured him that no such thought had ever been on her mind. He recommended to her the idea of a morganatic marriage, which would keep her in England—an advantage from several points of view. There had been precedents in British history. Should such an arrangement be made, Wallis would be entitled to be a duchess or to receive another title. However, she would not be permitted to be included in the Civil List in terms of her personal income; should she have heirs, they would not be entitled to any part of the royal inheritance. Nor could the children of the marriage inherit the throne itself.

Wallis was surprised and intrigued by the suggestion. She left the matter open at the end of the luncheon, giving no opinion but at the same time by no means rejecting the idea. That was as good as saying that she accepted it.

When the monarch returned from the Welsh mines for a party at the Channons', Wallis asked him whether he would accept the *Daily Mail*'s idea. He responded adversely, but in a subsequent discussion with Harmsworth he began to show some interest. However, when he summoned Baldwin to Buckingham Palace to discuss the matter, the prime minister made it clear that the obstacles to such an arrange-

ment would be formidable, perhaps insurmountable. A morganatic marriage would have to go through very difficult channels. The cabinet would have to approve it; special legislation would have to be passed in the form of a parliamentary bill. And Baldwin, who presumably thought it impolitic to mention the fact, no doubt bore in mind the potential danger in such an idea emanating from a highly questionable political source. This danger was known in the inner circles in Whitehall, but judiciously never mentioned in print.

According to the diaries of Chips Channon, another incident occurred that week. The king called for the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Gloucester and told them that he was going to marry Wallis. Kent was supposed to have exclaimed, "What will she call herself?" "What do you think, the Queen of England of course," the king allegedly replied. And he added, "Yes, and Empress of India, the whole bag of tricks." Kent and Gloucester were flabbergasted.

During the crisis one of the few supportive figures upon whom the king and Wallis could rely was Walter Monckton, who continued as attorney general to the Duchy of Cornwall, which associated him directly with an impor-

tant source of the monarchical income. In view of the fact that the king was obsessed with money and terrified that he might lose substantial moneys were he to abdicate the throne, Monckton's support of him was crucial. Be-spectacled, somewhat scholarly in appearance, Monckton had the look of a don who spent a lifetime in smoke-filled common rooms, but when his vivid, humorous, and heartfelt smile illuminated his ascetic face, he became another creature entirely. He was, above all, steadfast and loyal, a rare example of a humanist lawyer; a royalist to his fingertips, he was deeply concerned with the king's welfare and clearly refused to believe Vansittart's and Hardinge's suspicions of Wallis as a Nazi contact.

Day after day in the last week of November, the king summoned Monckton to Buckingham Palace, a procedure that involved an almost cloak-and-dagger series of movements. The king was determined that Monckton should not say anything that could be overheard by Hardinge, who was, he felt, spying constantly for Vansittart and whose offices adjoined the monarch's Belgian Suite on the ground floor. Under instruction, Monckton had to park his car at the back of the palace and then take the Privy Purse Entrance and ascend by elevator to

the top floor. From there, he had to walk across the vast building to the front and then take another elevator which descended directly into the Belgian Suite. This subterfuge was useless, since members of the palace staff reported on Monckton's every movement to Hardinge, who pointedly one evening invited him to his office for a drink.

In his supposedly secret meetings with Monckton, the king made clear that nothing would shake him in his complete emotional, physical, and mental involvement with Wallis. Monckton saw at once that any argument with his old friend was totally pointless. "If they want someone exactly like my father, they can have the Duke of York," the king said, hinting that he was fully prepared to abdicate in his brother's favor.

Monckton could not help but respect the king's extraordinary devotion, which went beyond his love of empire and his desire to be in a position of power. Furthermore, Monckton had the greatest respect for Wallis. He knew that she had caused the king to stop his heavy drinking, had cut down his smoking, and had insisted he keep up a level of physical fitness. He also knew, as Winston Churchill did, that whereas the King had been miserable, neurotic,

and tortured before he met Wallis, he was now released from the bondage of his sexual and emotional problems and was a fulfilled and confident man. In the face of such a transformation, how could the monarch's gratitude be in any way limited by considerations of duty, honor, and state?

Monckton issued sage advice: he suggested to the king that he should not take any drastic action until the decree absolute of the divorce in April 1937. The coronation would soon follow, when a decision could be made more prudently and from a position of greater power. However, the king replied that this was out of the question. He could not go through a major religious ceremony as head of church and state and the Commonwealth while he had in mind that the oaths of office could soon be rendered invalid by a decision to proceed with his wedding in defiance of world opinion and the cabinet. As Lord Birkenhead wrote in his life of Monckton, "[The king] hated and was repelled by the thought of being crowned under false pretenses." Monckton was impressed that the king was not prepared to be dishonest, however much he might be disrupting protocol and even the royal course of duty.

On this basis, Monckton felt confident in

seeking to achieve a compromise between 10 Downing Street and the palace. His was no easy task. Nor was he helped by the fact that Queen Mary was tortured over the situation and appalled by the thought that her eldest son might abdicate, leaving the throne to her second son, Albert, who, shy, physically frail, and completely lacking in public charisma, would be extremely uncomfortable in high office. She was not without humor in the circumstances. At one of her meetings with Baldwin, on the fifteenth of November, she said, "This is a pretty kettle of fish!" The Duke and Duchess of York were extremely uneasy during the crisis. The duchess, still deeply dissatisfied with the very presence of Wallis on the scene, would have preferred to have her dislodged completely, but clearly that was an impossibility. She did not relish the idea of her frail husband experiencing the pressures and strains of being king. The Dukes of Kent and Gloucester were also tortured by the thought of a possible abdication.

Winston Churchill decided that Wallis had to go. ("That bitch!" he later called her.) In what he believed to be the best interests of the king and in an attempt to save the throne, he connived a plot to drive Wallis out of England.

In this, he was, according to his later secretary, Sir John Colville, aided and abetted by Lord Beaverbrook, owner of the London *Daily Express*. Beaverbrook, who had been en route to a proposed vacation in Arizona, returned abruptly at the royal request but then proceeded to double-cross his monarch in the most abject manner. Sir John Colville confirmed that Beaverbrook pretended to offer the king his support, which amounted to little more than the discretion of his newspaper in dealing with the crisis, while a member of his staff cooked up a bomb plot, supposedly emanating from Amsterdam, in which a paid Australian assassin would murder Wallis. The same man arranged for threatening letters to be sent to her saying that vitriol would be thrown in her face, a substance which would scar and blind her for life.

At the same time Kenneth de Courcy, friend of the king and Wallis, stepped in. He was honorary secretary to the Imperial Policy Group, a royalist entity founded in 1934 by Sir Reginald Mitchell-Bank that included among its members such figures as Lord Mansfield, Lord Bertie of Thame, Alan Lennox Boyd, the Earl of Glasgow, Sir Charles Petrie, and Lord Phillimore. In those years, the IPG had sought at

every level of government to convince the governments of France, Italy, Austria, and Spain that, despite official pronouncements, Britain's actual if secret foreign policy was to keep out of all European conflicts in order to give a free hand to Hitler and Mussolini against the Soviet Union. Needless to say, this rash disclosure ensured a more binding relationship between de Courcy and the king and Wallis, while greatly irritating both Vansittart and Hardinge. De Courcy was close to George and Kitty Hunter, those early friends of Wallis when she had first come to London. The Hunters got wind (probably from information supplied by Sir Robert Vansittart) of the proposed assassination plot against Wallis. De Courcy remembers that he brought word of the plot to Aunt Bessie at Cumberland Terrace. The frightened Bessie burst into tears: "She called the King, who was at Fort Belvedere; he told her not to worry. But Wallis was utterly terrified when she received the news."

One night Wallis screamed, having been awakened suddenly by the sound of breaking glass. Somebody employed by Beaverbrook had tossed a brick through the windows of the house next door. From then on, she spent most of her time in a state of terror between

Claridges and Fort Belvedere, and Scotland Yard was instructed by the king to double her protection.

By November 29 Wallis was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Even Aunt Bessie's presence could not soothe her jangled nerves. When friends, headed by Sibyl Colefax, came to see her, she was on the edge of tears. At last she realized that in her reckless ambition she might well have ruined her own cause herself. The king burst into hysterical rages, condemning her enemies and protesting his undying love of her. There was an ominous event on November 30: the Crystal Palace, site of many major exhibitions and a notable London landmark, burst into flames and was reduced to rubble. The sky over London was a portentous blazing red. Wallis began to think seriously about leaving England. But she was too ill at Fort Belvedere to even consider doing anything for the time being. She mentioned possibly returning to the United States; the king said he would follow her on the next ship. On November 30 she wrote to her friend Foxy Gwynne that her heart had been acting up and she wasn't having any callers. She would remove herself and only return when "that damned crown has been firmly placed."

On December 1 the Right Reverend A. W. F. Blunt, bishop of Bradford, made a speech at the annual diocesan conference. He invoked the grace of God to inspire the king to do his duty faithfully. He expressed the hope that the king was aware of his need of God's grace; then he added, "Some of us wish he gave more positive signs of such awareness." He criticized the statement by the bishop of Birmingham that the coronation should be attended by a wide range of clergymen. He suggested that in the present situation the religious significance of the coronation ceremony would literally be endangered. This was misinterpreted as a critique of the royal relationship with Mrs. Simpson. The floodgates were opened to adverse comment in newspapers throughout the nation. Despite the king's supposed control of the press, a number of editorials sternly reminded him of the sacred trust of his high duty. It was clear that he had not succeeded in persuading the newspaper owners to follow his line of thought; they were too mindful of their readers' Christian sentiments and concern with moral values.

Baldwin even went to the extent of failing to send the king the minutes of the cabinet meetings at which the crisis was discussed. When

the king opened the red dispatch box, all he could find was an obscure document about arms to Spain. However, he had a spy in the cabinet, who informed him that Baldwin had totally written off the morganatic marriage proposal at the last cabinet meeting without even attempting to present it to Parliament. The prime minister had forced through the decision that either the government must accept Wallis as queen or the king must abdicate. It was following this meeting that a full-scale constitutional crisis broke over England.

On the evening of December 3 the Duke and Duchess of York arrived at Fort Belvedere for a most urgent discussion on what would happen if the king were to abdicate within twenty-four hours. That same night Baldwin met the king, who drove to Buckingham Palace for a stormy encounter in which the monarch made clear that he would not budge an inch. The next day the high commissioners for Canada, Australia, and South Africa put enormous pressure on the king. Headed by the Australian commissioner, who represented the strictly Roman Catholic prime minister, Joe Lyons, the commissioners made it clear that the dominions would never accept Wallis as queen or even as morganatic wife. She herself longed to

withdraw; she hated to be rejected. Even Canadian High Commissioner Vincent Massey, whose brother, the actor Raymond Massey, was an old poker-playing friend of Wallis's and the king's, was obliged to convey the grimdest warnings to the palace. In each of the Commonwealth countries, the newspapers were blunt in their outright assault upon the issue. This was grievously distressing to Wallis and to the king, who had been perfectly happy to have Baldwin throw open the issue to the empire. It was clear that, hour by hour, his position was becoming increasingly untenable, and by December 3 all the costly preparations for the coronation came to a standstill.

There was a flurry on the postage stamp market as thousands of people rushed to buy complete sets of the commemorative issue in the event that the stamps should be rendered obsolete within the week and thus increase considerably in value. Simultaneously, the king's friends in Berlin supported him once again. On Hitler's express instructions, Dr. Goebbels issued a communiqué forbidding any German newspaper or radio station to even mention the constitutional crisis. Hitler was deeply disturbed by the situation: he was counting upon the king to maintain a special relationship with

Germany in the future. Similarly, Mussolini was most disappointed, and Count Grandi in London conveyed that disappointment to the monarch. When these positions of the newly formed Axis powers appeared in the American press, it was of no help to the king's cause in Whitehall.

Day and night throughout the crisis meetings were held by the Imperial Policy Group. Kenneth de Courcy recalls the extreme tension among the members of the group as they tried to find some way through the mesh of problems involved. A preliminary meeting of interested and influential peers and members of Parliament was held in the London house of de Courcy's mother, and subsequent meetings were held at de Courcy's office in Old Queen Street. The group sent representations to the bishop of London, to Lord Salisbury, and to Walter Monckton in efforts to ameliorate the situation. The purpose was clear: the group wanted to force the king to call upon the government to resign or, at the very least, to pressure it into a position from which it would have to resign. The king would then send for Winston Churchill—who himself knew nothing of the plan—to form a new government; the IPC was convinced there were enough individuals

in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords to achieve its purpose. To this day, de Courcy believes that Churchill would have swept into power with an overwhelming majority. He would immediately have achieved massive public support and would have put Britain on a much firmer footing vis-à-vis Germany and Mussolini.

However, the IPC was doomed to failure. Monckton proved obstructionist. A major problem was that Thomas Dugdale, MP, informed de Courcy and another member, Lord Mansfield, that there was a flaw in Wallis's divorce case which might make the decree absolute impossible; he also informed his visitors that the Secret Intelligence Service had a case against Wallis which, if they could see the dossier, would entirely change their attitude: a direct reference to the Chinese file, Gregoire, and Wallis's Italian and German links. Should the Secret Intelligence Service suspect Wallis was a Nazi contact, they must prepare to deliver this fatal trump card at the right moment; the group's entire case for the royal marriage and the accession of Winston Churchill to the premiership would collapse.

Faced with this revelation, de Courcy and the Imperial Policy Group felt understandably

weakened in their resolve. Furthermore, Monckton failed to convey their purpose to the king. Either he felt that they were too maverick and unreliable or he was by now sensing that the monarch was quite ready—or would even prefer—to depart from his sacred office; or he may have got wind of the plot against Wallis and feared that if Churchill did assume the premiership she would have no chance of becoming either queen or morganatic wife.

Wallis's and the king's meetings at the time were gloomy with foreboding. Geoffrey Dawson's powerful London *Times* was bitterly assailing her. One evening, as the couple walked around the flagstone path at Fort Belvedere, a damp English fog crawling up from Virginia Water, the king explained to her that there was no middle way: it was either abdication or permanent separation. Wallis was beyond exhaustion, beyond being able to endure any more. She began to make arrangements to leave the country, and in London her staff was under instruction to pack up her belongings.

Wallis now wished she had left when the first inklings of disaster reached her. On Saturday, December 3, she made arrangements to move to Herman and Katherine Rogers's villa at Cannes; by long-distance telephone the Rog-

erses had agreed, as so often before, to provide her with safety and refuge. The king told her that he had elected to supply her with a companion and bodyguard for the journey, the slight, subdued (and very rich) Peregrine ("Perry"), Fourth Baron Brownlow. He was reliable, devoted, and a dear and trusted friend. The royal chauffeur George Ladbroke would drive them to Newhaven, where they would embark for the French port of Dieppe. In view of the leave taken by Inspector Storrier, Inspector Evans of Scotland Yard would be her official protector. Wondering whether she would be killed en route, Wallis hastily increased her jewelry insurance and drew up a will in her bedroom at Fort Belvedere, leaving most of her possessions to Aunt Bessie, her two devoted maids, and a few personal friends. Her solicitor George Allen assisted her with the document, which was written on blue Fort Belvedere stationery. In the late afternoon the king, with the assistance of Winston Churchill, Walter Monckton, and others, was at the Fort finishing work on his abdication broadcast. Wallis left so hurriedly there was barely time to say good-bye to the king (who gave her a ladybug bracelet charm with the message "Fly Away Home"), Aunt Bessie, and her personal

staff. To her great distress, she had to leave behind her dog, Slipper. In anguish, white with tension, she kissed the king and held him close. He told her she must wait for him no matter how long it would be. He would never give her up.

Her car moved out into the fog. Passage had been booked for her and Brownlow under the names of "Mr. and Mrs. Harris." In the wake of Wallis's departure for the Channel ferry, the king drove to Buckingham Palace to meet with Baldwin. He told him about the broadcast and placed the text in his hands. Meanwhile, Wallis refused to slow down her departure, despite the increasing fog. Wrapped in sables against the cold, she sat grimly staring into the night. The ferry left at 10 p.m. She knew there would be no sleep that night. During the journey she urged Lord Brownlow to find a way to have the king forget the marriage completely, end the crisis, and retain his throne. Clearly, she had in mind returning at some stage after the coronation to take up the position of royal mistress.

The fog continued during the Channel crossing and into France. Wallis and Brownlow checked into the Hotel de la Poste in Blois on the French side at 11 a.m. on December 4. She took a room for a few hours and lay down on

the bed. According to Lord Brownlow, she felt a twinge of loneliness and asked him to lie on the second bed in her room to keep her company. She cried, he recalled, with “primeval” pain. He took her hand gently but the tears would not stop.

On December 5, to avoid the reporters who had gotten wind of her movements and pursued her from the coast, Wallis was forced to abandon a plan to go to Paris to see Lady Mendl because it was clear that she would be intercepted by newspapermen. She was still terrified of assassination. Ladbroke took a circuitous route south, to make sure that there was no danger. They traveled through Evreux in Normandy. At the old coaching inn in that town, the Hotellerie du Grand-Cerf, she asked Brownlow to put in a telephone call to Fort Belvedere. She had made a prearrangement with the king to use code names in case she was overheard. After a long wait, Brownlow succeeded in getting through. Wallis could barely hear the king’s voice through a blizzard of static. She said, “On no account is Mr. James to step down.” In other words, the king must not abdicate. She went on, “You must get advice. You must bring in your old friends. See Duff Cooper; talk to Lord Derby; talk to the

Aga Khan.\* Do nothing rash. I will go to South America or somewhere." It was so difficult for the king to hear her that she was forced to scream the words. When she left the inn, she was horrified to find she had left her notes for the conversation in the telephone booth. Brownlow warned her that if she returned to retrieve them she would be recognized. It was a miracle that she had not been recognized yet. So she decided in a mood of great distress to leave the notes behind. A considerate manager locked them up in his office safe, apparently not even yielding to the temptation to read them. The following year they were retrieved for her by Harold Nicolson.

Back in England, the increasingly discredited Sir Oswald Mosley scarcely helped the king's cause by stating that he was entirely in the king's support and that the abdication issue should be submitted to the people for a referendum. This announcement only lent strength to Baldwin and to Sir Robert Vansittart and Alexander Hardinge. On December 5 Winston Churchill sent a memorandum to the king from his home, 11 Morpeth Mansions, advising him that he should not leave the country

\* All these names were given in code.

under any circumstances and that no final decision should be made until after Christmas, probably February or March. The archbishop of Canterbury that same day urged "silence and caution" in the matter of the crisis until the decision of the king be made public.

According to a diary kept by Mrs. Thomas Dugdale, wife of Baldwin's parliamentary under secretary, the king "was in a very nervous condition, threatening to do some violence to himself." Geoffrey Dawson's *Times* was thundering more loudly than ever. The prime minister, accompanied by Dugdale, had driven down that day through the fog to Fort Belvedere to confer with the king yet again. That same day Baldwin held a special cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street. Crowds stood in the driving rain as the ministers got out of their cars and walked into the brightly lit house. Sir Samuel Hoare came first; he was followed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain, Sir Kingsley Wood, Duff Cooper, and Anthony Eden, among others. As they left the building hecklers greeted them, shouting, "Edward's right. Baldwin's wrong!" Hundreds more swarmed outside the gates of Buckingham Palace, yelling: "We want Ed-

ward!" A group appeared at the Piccadilly house of the Duke and Duchess of York, chanting in unison, "We want Eddie and we want his Missus!" A band of women marched from Marble Arch to the palace with huge banners upon which, in red and blue letters, was the slogan: "After South Wales you cannot let him down. Come to the Palace and cheer him. Let the King know we are with him." Later in the afternoon the crowd outside the palace began singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow!" Two hundred stood at the corner of Whitehall and Downing Street after sunset, screaming, "We want our King!" They were rapidly broken up by the police. Meanwhile, Lord Rothermere's papers had on their front pages the enormous headline in black letters, "God Save the King!" The world was breathless; the American ironist H. L. Mencken called it "the greatest news story since the Resurrection."

In the meantime, the other members of the royal family remained in seclusion, not leaving their separate houses. The king consistently deferred meeting with his anxious brother York, who realized that huge responsibilities lay just a step away. Sleepless, wretched, the king had no energy to see anyone except his prime minister.

Wallis continued her journey south through France. The weather was appalling, a driving wind blowing a mixture of snow and sleet against the windshield of the Buick. The party breakfasted at the *Hôtel de Paris* in the town of Moulins. As the group continued, against increasingly hazardous driving conditions, the car became filled with the strong smell of Scotch whiskey. Lord Brownlow, who had thrust a small glass hip flask into his overcoat pocket, had accidentally shattered the bottle and the liquor had drenched him. When he opened the window to release the stench, the snow blew in and he had to close it again.

Wallis and her companions continued to the grim old city of Lyons. The press caught up with the car there, alerted by a pedestrian of whom Brownlow had rashly asked the way. They were chased relentlessly through the city, the pursuing vehicles emitting a deafening sound of Klaxon horns. They managed to flee successfully into Vienne. It was 1:30 p.m. A single reporter, Jean Bouvard of *Paris-Soir*, managed to secure an interview with Wallis as she arrived at the *Restaurant de la Pyramide*. She replied in schoolroom French, scarcely im-

proved since her days at Oldfields, "You French people are very sympathetic but very bothersome. I have not been able to get any sleep for two days. In the last hotel where I stayed last night there were twenty-four newspapermen. I want rest, lots of rest. . . . I can't make any statement. The King is the only judge. I have nothing to say except that I want to be left quiet."

Wallis entered the restaurant through a back door with the aid of her old friend Madame Point, director of the Pyramide. Madame Point arranged a private room on the first floor for lunch. Wallis was able to call the Rogerses and tell them that they could expect her within hours. Madame Point was no fool. She summoned the reporters and told them she was considering changing the name of her restaurant to Mrs. Simpson's.

Wallis achieved her escape from the press in a manner that would have done justice to the Count of Monte Cristo. There was a window above the kitchen sink, which was just large enough for her to squeeze through. In order to do so, she had to climb on the kitchen table while Lord Brownlow and Madame Point held the table. Inspector Evans and Monsieur Point stood in the alleyway to catch Wallis as she

jumped down. They all dashed to the waiting Buick and took off again through driving sleet.

Meanwhile, Wallis's maid Mary Burke had arrived by train at Cannes with Wallis's sixteen trunks and thirty-six suitcases. Wallis stopped again at the town of Brignoles to buy medicine and to phone the Rogerses once again to confirm that indeed she was on the way. Lord Brownlow tried to rouse the occupants of the local post office, but at first there was no response. Then windows burst open and the occupants screamed with fury at him as he asked desperately where a telephone could be found. The group finally located one, and Brownlow, beating at the instrument in helpless rage and screaming down the mouthpiece, at last managed to get through to the Villa Lou Viei.

At 2 a.m. on the sixth, while the king was sleepless and agonized at Fort Belvedere, the Buick at long last arrived at the wrought-iron gates of the Rogerses' villa at Cannes. Hundreds of spectators were waiting, and the car could barely edge its way through the crowd as the police strove to control the mass hysteria of the people, who had stood for many hours in the rain in expectation of Wallis's arrival. Wallis was on her knees on the car floor, a heavy rug completely concealing her.

When Wallis and Lord Brownlow walked into the hall, the Rogerses greeted them with immense relief. They had been fearful of some incident or fatal collision on the way, and their own stress was almost the equal of Wallis's. Though pale, exhausted, and fragile-looking in her brown hat and three-quarter-length sable coat, Wallis was relieved to note that Mary Burke was safely installed at the house and that the trunks and suitcases had been placed in her suite. There were ladders and pots of paint everywhere because up to that very night painters and electricians had been doing up six bedrooms and bathrooms. Wallis walked with her host and hostess into the gloomy, damp living room, its dankness barely relieved by a log fire roaring in the grate. She collapsed into a chair.

In London the mass demonstrations continued. The younger people of England were very much on the king's and Wallis's side. Supporters of the Labour party now found themselves in a curious alliance with the Fascists. In Berlin the blanket of silence continued. Germans anxious to learn news of the latest developments of the crisis had to obtain their newspapers from Austria. Walter Monckton tried a last-ditch stand, recommending that legislation should be passed through Parliament allowing the decree

nisi of the divorce to be declared absolute immediately without the necessary six-month waiting period. This idea was rejected out of hand.

When the king drafted a proposed broadcast calling the nation to rally behind him in his love for Wallis, Baldwin refused to permit it. The prime minister again wrote off the question of a morganatic marriage, and he would not agree to change the traditional status of the king's consort to permit Wallis to assume certain privileges. He advised the Commonwealth nations of his position, and they and Dawson's *Times* went along with him in his determination to prevent Wallis from becoming the king's bride. Beaverbrook and Rothermere continued to urge a delay until the matter could be weighed in a more detached spirit, preferably after the coronation. Winston Churchill suggested to the king that he should ask for a brief respite and retreat to Windsor Castle, firmly closing the gate to the prime minister. Then Churchill would send Baldwin a letter urging him not to hurry the king to a decision and stating that it was imperative there be a delay. Even while Churchill began maneuvering in this direction, the king, alone in his bedroom, walking up and down, reached his ultimate de-

cision. He would give up. He could not possibly consider fighting Baldwin. Any delay would only cause more agony to him and to Wallis. He couldn't fight the Commonwealth. He might even be risking civil war. He could no longer rule over a united nation. It would be torn by controversy, anger, and bitterness for the rest of his reign. Moreover, Wallis would not only be in danger if he forced the marriage, her unpopularity among the political parties and the more righteous figures of the Church of England would make her position untenable.

On December 6 Wallis wrote to the king expressing her anxiety that he should not abdicate. She was afraid that if he did so, she would be put "in the wrong light to the entire world because they will say that I could have prevented it." In the course of a long and confused letter, Wallis went on to suggest that the entire matter should somehow be postponed until the autumn of 1937. She suggested that the king should urge Baldwin to agree to the postponement. She repeated that she was "terrified of what the world will say," and she incoherently repeated her idea of the postponement again and again. Even her spelling went to pieces as she wrote of the king making an eight-month sacrifice for his people by holding

off from the decision. Part of the reason that she desired the delay was to escape the situation herself; she wrote to Sibyl Colefax at a later date, clearly indicating her continuing need to flee to parts unknown. Her panic was so overpowering she was hysterical, exhausted, devastated by terror. After a sleepless night the king at last decided on December 7 that he would abdicate. Once he made the choice, he was flooded with relief and happiness. Whereas only two days before he was on the verge of suicide, he knew now in his heart of hearts that he had made the correct decision. The two things that mattered most to him in the world were the British Empire and Wallis. By choosing Wallis, he would save the Commonwealth. He summoned Monckton and said, "I want you to go to London immediately and warn the Prime Minister that when he comes to the Fort this afternoon I shall notify him formally that I have decided to abdicate."

Monckton reminded him of what this step would mean. Monckton told the king that within days he would be no more than a private citizen and, since he intended to go into exile, he would be pursued relentlessly by reporters. Furthermore, he must not see Wallis until her divorce became absolute, or he would risk the

possibility that his enemies would bring pressure upon the king's proctor, who was in charge of the decisions in the matter of whether a divorce decree could be passed through as absolute without obstacles.

On the seventh, Winston Churchill appeared in the House of Commons protesting the king's cause, only to be greeted with screams of "Sit down!" and "Shame!" Although Baldwin had lost some of his notes, several of them in the toilet, and dropped others on the floor, banging his head on a table as he rose from picking them up, he recovered himself and gave what was probably the most accomplished speech of his career. He correctly stated the moral and political issues involved, achieving a dignity that even his many enemies were forced to admit was peerless. He was the hero of the hour in the eyes of all except the most fervent Labourites and the Communist member, Willie Gallacher.

Wallis was consumed with guilt and fear. When she got wind of the king's intention to abdicate, she wrote an impassioned letter, insisting that he reconsider her offer to back out of the situation completely. Her enemies, led by the Duke and Duchess of York, Baldwin, Vansittart, and the Hardinges, were convinced

she was devising this appeal as a way of securing permanently the monarch's devotion. They refused to believe her sincerity when they learned of the gesture. She sent the letter by air mail, and on the seventh called the king at Fort Belvedere to read him a statement she was issuing to the press; she had been assisted in writing it by Lord Brownlow and Herman Rogers. Unhappily, Wallis offered "to withdraw forthwith from a situation which has been rendered both unhappy and untenable." Lord Brownlow read the statement to a mass of international newspaper reporters at a press conference at the Hôtel Majestic in Cannes. While the statement was being delivered, Associated Press noted: "In her haven of refuge of the Villa Lou Viei, a dim light glowed in Mrs. Simpson's bedroom. Faintly silhouetted against it, a slender figure paced back and forth as the American divorcée awaited the next move—Edward's acceptance, or his refusal to surrender her love even at the cost of his throne." The author of this piece did not realize that the king had already made his decision and that nothing Wallis or anyone else said would shake his inexorable resolve.

Nevertheless, by December 8 the king still had not abdicated. Nor had any public state-

ment been made that he would do so. However, the king's decision had already filtered out through the grapevine. Mosley's Blackshirts again picketed at Buckingham Palace. At the same time, Wallis's solicitor Theodore Goddard decided to fly to Cannes in a last-ditch effort to persuade Wallis to give up the king completely. Baldwin and one of his allies in the crisis, Sir Horace Wilson, were behind Goddard's mission. The king was furious when he learned of it, and he forbade Goddard to go; but Goddard was under prime ministerial orders. Accompanied by Dr. William Kirkwood, his personal physician, who was also a gynecologist, Goddard, despite a heart condition, got into an airplane normally used for official business with a shaky engine that threatened to give out at any minute and undertook a harrowing flight through thunderstorms.

At the same time, the king at last agreed to see his brother the Duke of York, who had arrived at Fort Belvedere without being invited. It was necessary to discuss with that shy and awkward man the responsibilities that would be his within a few days. Both men were desperately weary. Their state of mind was not improved by the equally impromptu arrival of Baldwin, who walked in with Dugdale and

Monckton at 5:30 p.m. To the king's horror, Baldwin arrived with a suitcase. The monarch was annoyed to think that the hated prime minister would have the nerve to want to spend the night at the fort. The king had already decided any further discussion was useless. After a meaningless dinner Baldwin left, pale and depressed, to take his final leave of the king whose moral integrity he had so strenuously tried to preserve.

The king looked fresh and happy that evening. Now that he had made up his mind, he enjoyed his first sound sleep in longer than he could remember. Yet the newspapers continued to say that he had not made up his mind.

At Cannes on the night of the eighth, Wallis received Goddard. Lord Brownlow was furious that he had been sent. Brownlow had made it clear that the gynecologist, Dr. Kirkwood, would not be welcome in the house. The presence of such a person could only give rise to rumor that Wallis was pregnant. Goddard then said to Wallis that she should immediately withdraw the divorce action against Ernest Simpson. If she did that, the crisis would be over. As it turned out, she required little persuasion. In her state of nervous exhaustion, she would have been happy to disappear to New

Zealand or Argentina and never be seen again. She replied she would do anything to keep the king on the throne. Goddard expressed his pleasure in her response. Wallis turned to Lord Brownlow for his advice. Brownlow said, "If the King does abdicate, his object will be marriage; for you to scrap your divorce will produce a hopeless climax and an all-round tragedy." However, Wallis was prepared to do what Goddard asked. She tried to reach the fort by telephone. The king could not be reached. He returned her call at noontime. Wallis said to him, "I have agreed to withdraw my divorce petition." The king responded both independently and through the solicitor George Allen that the matter had already progressed beyond the point of rescue. The abdication documents were drawn up. The king said to her, "You can go wherever you want. To China, Labrador or the South Seas. But wherever you go, I will follow you." It was now clear to Wallis that nothing would shake the royal resolve.

Wallis wondered what she should do next. She thought she might go to Peking. For the time being, she could go to Italy, by special train, to stay with Lord and Lady Berkeley, old friends

of hers with a villa in Rome and police protection. Did she think of her old lover, Count Ciano? Still determined to save the situation and bring about some form of marriage, Lord Rothermere asked Esmond Harmsworth, who was then on the Riviera, to intercede with Wallis, but Harmsworth could provide no adequate reason why she should change her mind. Goddard returned defeated to London.

On the morning of December 10 the king held a meeting with his brother York, Monckton, and other advisers on the matter of his financial future. He was entitled to a life interest in Sandringham and Balmoral. The suggestion had been made that he should return these properties to the Crown upon his abdication. However, he did not prove to be cooperative. Instead, he would compel his brother to pay him £25,000 a year—the equivalent of £600,000 a year in 1987 money—in return for his releasing the two residences. He would be required to pay part of the pensions of those retainers at Sandringham and Balmoral whom he had discharged or who were retiring of their own free will or at the appropriate age. Through intermediaries, Baldwin conveyed an even sterner proviso: in return for these finan-

cial considerations, the king must never return to England unless he were granted special permission by the government. The implication was that if he refused to obey the request, he might be very restricted in terms of income under the provisions of the Civil List. The king was displeased. The news that he would not receive the income from the Duchy of Cornwall thenceforth was a matter of great distress to him. He had apparently forgotten that an abdicated monarch was not entitled to that emolument. It was stated that he very nearly withdrew the abdication at that moment. But instead he signed the Instrument of Abdication:

I, Edward VIII, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India, do hereby declare My irrevocable determination to renounce the Throne for Myself and for My descendants, and My desire that effect should be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately.

As the king inscribed his signature on the document in front of his brothers York, Gloucester, and Kent, he felt marvelous, "like a

swimmer surfacing from a great depth," as he wrote in his memoirs.

That same night thirty Fascists, four of whom were in Blackshirt uniforms, were seen in Regent Street. They broke up and proceeded in twos and threes to Buckingham Palace. By 9 p.m. 500 pro-Nazis had joined them. Some 200 youths and girls stood chanting, "We want Edward!" and "One two three four five, we want Baldwin, dead or alive!" At intervals they gave the Fascist salute, cheered, and sang patriotic songs and the national anthem. Just before ten, several youths, headed by one in Fascist uniform, led 800 demonstrators to 10 Downing Street. Other Fascist demonstrators picketed the House of Commons with placards reading: "Sack Baldwin. Stand by the King!" At the same time, they gave the Fascist salute. Toward midnight the Blackshirts were screaming, "Long live the King! Long live Bessie Warfield!" The next day, according to Scotland Yard reports, 3000 attended a mass meeting in Stepney at which Sir Oswald Mosley demanded the abdication issue be put to the people. Windows were smashed in Bancroft Road. There was a struggle between Fascists and anti-Fascists in the street.

That same day the king lunched with Win-

ston Churchill, whose existence in the political wilderness was doomed to be extended because of his total loyalty to his monarch. Churchill helped the king to make some last-minute alterations to the abdication speech upon which Walter Monckton had already extensively worked. As Churchill, on the verge of tears, left the house he quoted two lines of a verse: "He nothing common did or mean / Upon that memorable scene . . ." The lines were by the poet Andrew Marvell and referred to the beheading of King Charles I. After lunch the king had a further meeting with the Duke of York, who was seeking to overcome his nervousness once more and his fear that his stammer would handicap him badly when he had to broadcast or make public speeches. York suggested that the king should now assume the title "the Duke of Windsor." The king was delighted with the suggestion and accepted it immediately.

In the late afternoon Monckton arrived from London, having taken the text of the broadcast to Baldwin for his verbal approval. Baldwin asked for the insertion of a sentence saying that he had given the king "every consideration" during the crisis. The king was irritated by the audacity of this request by his archenemy, but

felt that in the interest of propriety he should make the inclusion. Before leaving for Windsor Castle to make his 10 o'clock broadcast, the king called Wallis to tell her that he would be going to Switzerland and staying at a hotel near Zurich. Wallis told him she was shocked that the British government would not have provided him with a safe haven where he could be in a state of privacy. If he were in a hotel, he would face the same nightmare she was enduring, a state of being totally under siege. He would never have a minute's peace from press or public. Instead, at Lady Mendl's suggestion, Lord Brownlow could arrange for him to stay with his old friends the Baron and Baroness Eugene Rothschild at their castle, Schloss Enzesfeld, near Vienna. Wallis said she would call him immediately to make the necessary arrangements.

She did. They at once agreed. Kitty Rothschild, a beautiful American woman, was especially overjoyed by the idea.

Accompanied by his favorite dog, Slipper, the king said good-bye to his staff at Fort Belvedere. The suitcases were carried to the royal Buick. As it swung down the driveway with Ladbroke at the wheel, the king looked back at his beloved fort, realizing he might never see it

again. In a few days the furniture would be stored; most of it was to remain in storage for almost a decade. The wrench was painful. The Fort had been his home for so long; he had poured so much of his thought and skill into remodeling it, creating an oasis, a haven from the cruel world. He continued to Royal Lodge, Windsor, where his mother, Queen Mary, his brothers, and his sister, the princess royal, were waiting for him. The conversation at dinner was awkward; the Duke of Kent, always highly emotional, broke down and sobbed uncontrollably at the table; the Duke of York was on the verge of tears. As the meal concluded, Monckton arrived to accompany the king to Windsor Castle. Meanwhile, Herman Rogers had managed to reach Monckton and inform him that the Rothschilds would be delighted to have the king as a house guest.

Ironically, the monarch's old enemy Lord Wigram was now deputy constable and lieutenant governor of Windsor Castle; he impassively greeted the king and Monckton as they entered the great hallway. In the Augusta Tower the director of the British Broadcasting Corporation, Sir John Reith, surrounded by a technical team, was waiting with what was described by one eyewitness as "a basilisk stare."

The tower room had been set up as a temporary studio. Then, at 10 p.m., the king spoke, warmly, confidently, released from his torment. He made clear that the decision to abdicate was his and his alone. That the woman he loved had tried to the last minute to persuade him to take a different course. That his brother the Duke of York would take his place on the throne “without interruption or injury to the life and progress of the Empire. And [Winston Churchill’s addition] he has one matchless blessing, enjoyed by so many of you and not bestowed on me—a happy home with his wife and children.” The king went on to mention, no doubt with a sinking feeling, how the ministers of the Crown, “and in particular Mr. Baldwin,” had always treated him with full consideration. He concluded:

I now quit altogether public affairs, and I lay down my burden. It may be some time before I return to my native land, but I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and Empire with profound interest, and if at any time in the future I can be found of service to His Majesty in a private station I shall not fail. And now we all have a new king. I wish him, and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with

all my heart. God bless you all. God save the King.

With the Rogerses, Wallis listened to the broadcast in the drawing room of the Villa Lou Viei. By her own account, she was quietly grief-stricken, but Katherine Rogers told her friend Fern Bedaux that in fact Wallis flew into a tantrum, shouting with rage and smashing things. She hated the idea of the abdication. She had wanted to be the king's mistress and to keep her husband; she had wanted to be powerful without the burdens of power and the agony of guilt. Raised like so many Americans to believe that the fulfillment of any ambition was possible and that the world was her oyster, she had learned, she wrote, "the dregs of my cup of failure and defeat." She had discovered that a prime minister and a cabinet and a Secret Intelligence Service bent upon her destruction left her no chance, no hope, of survival. Moreover, for the rest of her life she would be accused of destroying her monarch and of bringing down his rule. It was in that knowledge that she went to her room alone for a night of unendurable pain.

## EXILE

The Duke of Windsor, as he would now be known, though the title was not gazetted until May, had a last meeting with his mother and his three brothers; Queen Mary was, as always, superbly controlled, but the Duke of Kent was still visibly distraught and said at one stage, "This is quite mad." He was drastically upset at the thought of not seeing Windsor again for an incalculable length of time. As Windsor left the house, he remembered his manners and bowed to the new king.

The duke had two last-minute visitors. The first was Winston Churchill, who bade him a warm farewell. The second was Count Grandi, who expressed the sympathy of the govern-

ment in Italy. Neither of these visits was recorded in the press of any country; Count Grandi has only recently revealed them to the present author.

The drive, with Ladbroke at the wheel of the Buick, to Portsmouth to take the night ferry to Boulogne was dragged out because of the increasingly foul weather. The duke occupied himself by talking with Monckton, whom he had asked to travel with him to the dock, about the arrangements in Europe. He also read a letter from his sister-in-law Elizabeth, Duchess of York, who had been ill in bed but, for all her hatred of Wallis, was full of good wishes. And he told Monckton how deeply he loved his mother; there was no indication in his voice of bitterness because of her attitude to the woman he loved.

The fog, drizzle, and sudden bursts of rain delayed the vehicle's arrival at Portsmouth dock. Ladbroke drove past Nelson's famous flagship, *Victory*, which had become a tourist attraction, and realized he was lost. As he searched for the correct entrance, the Unicorn Gate, the duke pointed out various ships to Monckton, giving particulars of their histories. They drove on, looking for the HMS *Fury*, which at the last minute had been substituted

for *Enchantress*; according to some versions, the latter vessel was rejected because of the unfortunate associations of the name.

The duke boarded *Fury* accompanied by Major Ulick Alexander, keeper of the privy purse, who had been delegated to take charge of his financial affairs, and by his new equerry, Sir Piers Legh. He was welcomed aboard by the commander in chief, Admiral Sir William Fisher, and two other admirals. In his cabin the duke said farewell to his assistant private secretary, Sir Godfrey Thomas. The duke took Monckton's hands in his; never had he known a more devoted friend.

The ship sailed at 2 a.m. The Channel crossing was choppy; the duke remained secluded in his cabin. He was met at Boulogne by the *Orient Express*, which had been specially diverted to make the connection. The train's comptroller, Roger Tibot, greeted him as he boarded; the duke had asked that there not be a private car on this occasion, but rather a simple first-class compartment; fortunately, this ruse, plus the diversion of the train, threw the reporters off the scent. The duke told Tibot he did not want to take any meals in the restaurant car and insisted that Tibot have the sleeping-car attendant serve him in the compartment. The

duke took his light and unpretentious breakfast, lunch, and dinner on trays which were set upon suitcases that filled the space between the facing seats. This was distressing to Tibot, who was used to the former king entering the dining car, after the other passengers had left it, to enjoy an exquisitely prepared repast.

Meanwhile, Wallis was far from comfortable at the Villa Lou Viei, which she had liked much better in 1928. The house was over 600 years old. The guest bedrooms were on split levels, with an ancient stone wall that ran up between the floors. The thick outer walls retained the clinging dampness of the Mediterranean winter. The living room, which seemed dark even in spring and summer, was cavernous, dank, and cheerless despite its chintz-covered chairs and bowls of green plants on the French provincial tables. There was even, Wallis learned for the first time, a ghost: Herman swore he had seen the original builder of the house flitting in a shadowy form through the corridors and rooms. The residence, which once had seemed a glowing refuge, now looked more and more like an expensive dungeon.

The Rogerses did everything possible to

cheer Wallis up. But all she could see as she stared glumly out the windows were five gendarmes and three British policemen walking up and down, and beyond Herman's well-tended vegetable garden the misty, rain-swept slopes that led down the hill to Cannes. Even the cuisine was depressing; the old couple who acted as major domo and cook busied themselves in the badly kept-up kitchen to little effect. Wallis began to wish she were somewhere else. In the meantime, her cook, chambermaid, and chauffeur arrived at Dieppe with a dozen suitcases and trunks, and left at once by car for Cannes. They arrived two days later; at last Wallis had some more of her things. She got in touch with George Sebastian at Hammamet in Tunisia, but finally decided not to make the move. She was very annoyed the next day when a shoal of letters arrived, many of them threatening and some of them actually stating that the assassination plan had not been abandoned. As a result, the chief of police of Cannes was called in for consultation. He stationed himself outside her rooms in person, concerned that if anything happened to her it would bring disgrace upon his community.

On December 12 Wallis wrote to the duke

that she had heard there was "an organization of women" who had sworn to kill her. She urged him to arrange for full protection at all times; she was placed under armed guard.

The duke proceeded to Vienna on December 13. Upon his arrival on the *Orient Express* he was met by his old friend the British minister to Austria, the genial Sir Walford Selby, and by a party of journalists who behaved with uncharacteristic reserve. Among these was Douglas Reed, later the author of the famous book *Insanity Fair*, who observed that in spite of everything the 40-year-old duke still looked amazingly boyish, innocent, and untouched by time and stress.

Another who was present was the attaché Dudley Forwood, who had first met Wallis and the Prince of Wales at Kitzbühel.

At the duke's request, Forwood would soon become his equerry and private secretary. In the meantime, Forwood was put by Sir Walford Selby in charge of the royal arrangements. The duke wanted to proceed to the Rothschilds' Schloss Enzesfeld immediately. But it wasn't possible, because protocol required that he present his respects to President Miklas. With Forwood the duke proceeded to pay those respects; a further requirement was

that afterward the president must appear at the British Legation to present his own respects. This tiresome ritual went on and on.

Sir Dudley recalls:

When I informed the Duke of the latter requirement, he said, "Oh! Miklas had better be asked to lunch!" But there was a problem. Lady Selby was a good but extremely stingy hostess. No matter who it was, if there were guests for lunch they only got one lamb chop each. I was very concerned that something better would be done for this important occasion. But the chef was under orders to supply a maximum of four lamb chops. So there could be no change. Learning of this, the Duke informed me that I did not need to have lunch!

The Rothschilds sent their chauffeur to pick up the duke and his party and drive them to Enzesfeld. Dudley Forwood was among the entourage. The duke had been at the schloss briefly the year before, suffering from a bad cold. Forwood remembers:

I returned to Vienna almost immediately, but then I had to return because there were so many problems at the schloss. First, none of the

Duke's personal entourage spoke German, though of course he did. That made it difficult for them to communicate with the staff. The equerry, the Hon. John Aird, left, recalled to Buckingham Palace by the King. The other equerry, Sir Piers Legh, stayed on, but he wasn't at all in tune with the Duke. He was an older man, very nervous and tense, horrified by the Abdication, not at all sympathetic to Mrs. Simpson, and upset by the fact that he couldn't speak German. So, in this very difficult situation, I was asked to return and become equerry. I accepted at once.

Forwood soon learned the ritual of serving a royal master, a term which he still uses in reference to the duke. In the morning the valet would wake the duke, and Forwood would then enter the bedroom and announce the order of the day's business. He must bow as he did so; on the occasions when he failed to do so, the Duke quietly reprimanded him. A very important matter attended to by the valet under Forwood's supervision was that of the royal clothing. When the duke played golf, he would change into a golfing outfit; he would not wear that outfit at lunch, but had to change into a suit and tie; if he wished to garden in the afternoon, he would again have to change. And

then of course in the evening there would be the obligatory black tie or, for special occasions, white tie and tails.

But from the beginning, despite the onerous challenges involved, Forwood was utterly devoted to the duke. He would, in 1987, hear not a word against his master. One of his most vivid memories of Enzesfeld is that the duke called Wallis several times a day. The duke seemed reluctant to restrain himself, pouring out his agony to her, while the telephone bills in those expensive times averaged the equivalent of between \$300 and \$400 a week; as he talked to her, he could see in his room dozens of photographs of her that he had brought from Fort Belvedere. Although pleased to accommodate him, his host and hostess had mixed feelings about him, and he about them. Kitty Rothschild was still a very attractive woman, but the duke did not find her particularly intelligent. He had always joked that she had become Protestant with her first husband, Roman Catholic with her second, and Jewish with her third.\*

\* The political situation in Austria vis-à-vis Nazi Germany was extremely delicate where Jews were concerned. Although nothing approaching Hitler's behavior toward Jewish people existed

Wallis continued to suffer the torments of the damned. She wrote to the duke, "So much scandal has been whispered about me even that I am a spy that I am shunned by people so until I have the protection of your name I must remain hidden." She expressed her desire for more and more obscurity, a pathetically futile wish in the circumstances. But she expressed hopes that the love she shared with the duke would win out against all obstacles.

In England Emerald Cunard and Sir Philip Sassoon disowned the exiled couple outright. Following hypocritical statements of sympathy and sorrow from Stanley Baldwin in the House of Commons, the archbishop of Canterbury delivered a moralistic and protracted BBC broadcast on December 13, remarking, *inter alia*, of the late monarch:

Even more strange and sad is it that he should have sought his happiness in a manner inconsistent with Christian principles of marriage and within a social circle whose standards and ways of life are alien to all the best instincts of his people. Let those who belong in this circle know that today they stand rebuked by the

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in Austria, there was always the threat that the situation might change and the Rothschilds would have to leave.

judgement of the nation which had loved King Edward.

His comments made him singularly unpopular, and not only among the duke's still-loyal friends. His broadcast had the disagreeable flavor of a righteous churchman kicking an unfortunate man when he was down. Two days later Labour member of Parliament Ellen Wilkinson, both in the Commons and in an article in the newspaper *The Sunday Referee*, went a step further. She said:

There had been growing uneasiness about political tendencies around [Mrs. Simpson], or perhaps it would be fairer to say, in groups that had been using her influence over King Edward for their own purposes. . . . Eager to be behind Mrs. Simpson was a set that makes little secret of its enthusiasm for the political and social doctrines of a power not particularly friendly toward Britain. Prime Minister Baldwin recently described what he called a dangerous mentality in politics as being "the enjoyment of power without responsibility."

As a sop to the public (and perhaps to avoid a libel suit), Miss Wilkinson added that she

wasn't implying that either the duke or Wallis knew what was being done to them politically. This scarcely soothed the troubled brows of the two victims of the speech and the article.

At the same time, yet another blow fell. Francis Stephenson, an obscure and ancient legal clerk, intervened in what seemed to be a fairly straightforward legal procedure toward the granting of the decree absolute of the divorce. He claimed to be able to show cause as to why the divorce should be stopped. What information he had, if any, was never made clear, and he subsequently withdrew. However, the likelihood is that he got wind of the collusion: the use of a professional correspondent at the Hotel de Paris at Bray. She possibly told him of her role in the matter while working with him in a similar capacity.

Wallis was in a state of shock when she learned of the intervention. She wrote to the duke, "I didn't think the world could put more on two people whose only sin is to love." She added that she looked a hundred years old and weighed only 110 pounds, that England had made her a "wreck." She wrote, "The world is against me and me alone." She wondered if she could survive the ordeal.

Wallis must have worried that the truth

would come out about her earlier collusion in the matter of Spencer and that somebody might produce evidence that she was born out of wedlock and not baptized, which would preclude her religious marriage to the duke, even if it might reveal her marriage to Ernest to be invalid. She went out on long and meaningless drives around the curving roads of the three Corniches, the hairpin bends and sudden glimpses of the sea temporarily distracting her from her anguish. She was relieved to hear that Aunt Bessie would join her for Christmas. She wondered if the ordeal would ever end.

In that time of loneliness and sorrow, it is clear that Wallis at last began to feel a little fondness for the duke. Her letters to him at the time expressed some show of devotion and loyalty, though they still did not have the impassioned affection of his own. At that time, Newbold Noyes, who was married to Wallis's cousin Lelia of Wakefield Manor, was publishing a series of articles in the United States (and would soon do so in France) based upon what Wallis and the duke had thought were private conversations at Fort Belvedere and Cumberland Terrace in November. The articles were largely empty-headed puffery about the couple's likes and dislikes (Wallis hated cats; she loved open

fires and high winds). However, Wallis felt very strongly that the pieces represented invasion of privacy; she even overreacted to them to the point that she opened a libel suit against Noyes.

She made a serious mistake. Instead of engaging a respectable French attorney, she turned to the Nazi activist Armand Gregoire. Gregoire was still notorious—listed with the Deuxième Bureau and the Sûreté as one of the leading Nazi agents in France. Espionage files on him currently deposited at the Archives Diplomatiques in Paris and at the National Archives in Washington reveal that despite his position as a prominent lawyer, with offices in the Place Vendôme and a socially prominent wife, Crystal, who was an American by birth, he was under ceaseless watch by the authorities. France was still under the Socialist government of Léon Blum, and by a peculiar irony the head of Blum's cabinet, M. Blumel, was the brother of Maître Suzanne Blumel, later Blum, who would follow Gregoire many years later as Wallis's lawyer.

The situation was clearly monitored by Herman Rogers, whose position as an American agent was still continuing; Wallis's decision to engage Gregoire enhanced suspicions of her

Nazi connections in representatives of MI6 in Paris. In short, she was in worse trouble than ever.

The phone calls and letters continued with countless bomb or other death threats, causing the Rogerses to change their telephone number again and again. An unpleasant footnote to an already disagreeable month occurred when a news announcement revealed that Wallis's old home at 212 North Biddle Street, Baltimore, had been bought by an attorney, Harry J. Green, who planned to turn it into a museum.

The duke traveled frequently to Vienna both to receive ear treatments from Professor Neumann and to renew his earlier acquaintance with Chancellor von Schuschnigg and President Miklas. Now that he was no longer on the throne, he was careful to restrict his discussions with these men to social niceties. He also renewed his friendship with the clever, sophisticated American minister to Austria, George Messersmith, who, from his first day in Vienna, had kept up, through a network of intelligence contacts and a consistent interception of cables and phone calls from other embassies, what amounted to a detailed watching brief on the duke. On the evening of December 15 the duke rose from his sickbed, to which

he was confined with severely aching ears and a bad headache, to join Fritz Mandl for dinner. Mandl, the husband and discoverer of the motion picture star Hedy Lamarr, was a Jewish armaments maker who was already supplying Hitler despite his ethnic origin. The duke also met with Eugene Rothschild's brother Louis, whom he would later assist to escape from Europe. Lord Brownlow had meantime arrived from Cannes with a bundle of notes and reminders from Wallis, only some of which later made their way into the pages of the collected correspondence edited by Michael Bloch.

Two problems, other than the continually tormenting matter of their separation, were paramount in the minds of Wallis and the duke. The first was the question of where they would live once they were married. There was some discussion of their going to the French estate of the Duke of Westminster, who had, of course, on a previous occasion given them the use of his yacht. But accepting this idea would have been unwise: Westminster still had very strong and notorious Nazi connections. Prince Roman Fancuszko suggested they might want to move to his castle in Poland; there was talk of their buying Count Bela Zichy's 4000-acre estate in Hungary. None of these plans

seemed practicable, but another idea the couple took seriously. The Rogerses put up the idea that they might want to move, at least for a time, to the Château de Candé at Tours, not far from Paris; the château was the home of the naturalized American industrial systems tycoon Charles Bedaux and his American wife, Fern.

The second problem was the matter of the royal income from the Civil List, which was to keep the duke in comfort for the rest of his days. Despite his brother York's verbal approval, the matter would take several weeks or months to go through the necessary committee. And there was no guarantee that, at the end of that time, the arrangement would be approved. For the moment, though he still kept it a secret, the duke of course had the very substantial sum of money he had saved from the Duchy of Cornwall. But even that bounty would not be sufficient, given the standard of living to which he was accustomed, to provide for him indefinitely. At some stage in this period Wallis agreed to give up the £300,000 he had settled on her, exchanging it for £10,000 a year for life. However, the duke was still fretful, obsessed as always with money. In London his devoted Winston Churchill never ceased,

either then or during the next few months, to press repeatedly for the cash. As a member of the Civil List Committee, Churchill did his utmost to override the objections of the others. He thought of himself still, and always would, as the duke's surrogate father or kindly uncle.

The reporters still clung relentlessly to the grounds of both Schloss Enzesfeld and the Villa Lou Viei. Wallis forced herself to make an awkward appearance one afternoon, giving a brief press conference in which she said little of interest. She was treading water, consumed with boredom and loneliness, unable to sleep; she relished prominence, publicity, and admiration and could not bear to think that she was hated as few other women had been hated in history. It was scarcely a relief to her to learn that a wax statue of her in a symbolically scarlet evening gown now stood in a chamber of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London. Visitors to the exhibit noted that her startlingly realistic violet-colored glass eyes looked balefully across at the archbishop of Canterbury.

Minor troubles increased. The duke called Wallis frantically to tell her that her beloved Slipper had been mauled by Baron Rothschild's dogs and a vet had to be summoned to take care of the animal. As Christmas approached,

he was not in a mood to enjoy the season. The piles of letters heaping up on his desk even surpassed Wallis's. When he advertised for a secretary, 800 women lined up for the job. He finally chose one, addressing her through sneezes and a worsening headache while sipping red wine spiced with cloves, sugar, and cinnamon.

When Wallis went shopping, press and public made her trip impossible. Her white hat and ermine coat were spotted as she took a walk along the Cannes waterfront, and she had to flee back into the car. Matters did not improve in England: His Master's Voice, which had the royal warrant for reproducing speeches, was forbidden by Sir John Reith of the BBC to issue a disk of the abdication speech. Bootleg copies sold furiously in the United States and in continental Europe.

On December 19 Aunt Bessie at last arrived at Lou Viei; Wallis embraced her in tears. It was a heartfelt, eagerly longed-for reunion. The duke busied himself with preparations for Christmas. He sent Wallis a mink cape; she in turn sent him a possum coat. Recovered from his cold, he reverted to his usual custom of morning exercises and played golf and ninepins, and he even tried yodeling at a small

dinner party in the newly constructed bar and dining room. And he was overjoyed when the unhappy Slipper, who had been lying in his tiny kennel, suddenly recovered from his wounds and woke the household to reveal that he had triumphantly cornered and killed a large gray mouse.

He was soon depressed again. On December 22 he wrote to Wallis expressing his agony at the thought of the four months of separation to come. The ten days he had spent at the schloss had almost driven him mad with their slowness and monotony. He wrote that he lived only for their telephone conversations in the evening, that without Alexander Graham Bell's invention life would be unbearable. He complained of the cruel and inhuman newspapers; he talked of the cruelty of life itself.

On that same day the duke wrote to Aunt Bessie, describing the last two weeks as "a nightmare."

On Christmas eve Wallis decided to ignore the press, and made her way through a large and eager crowd with the Rogerses to the Palm Beach Casino in Cannes. It was officially announced that she had stayed home. There was no Christmas tree, but she worked hard on the decorations of holly and mimosa. As an un-

pleasant Christmas gift to the couple, Buckingham Palace issued an announcement that sixty employees of Sandringham, who had been dismissed by the duke, had now been restored to their former positions. The duke appeared in church on Christmas day, joining George Messersmith at the services. Sir Walford Selby read the first lesson, and the duke read, in his excellent voice, still with its touches of American and cockney pronunciation, the first twenty verses of the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. He and Wallis exchanged telephone calls the same day. On the following afternoon the duke was mobbed by hundreds of children as he gave away Christmas gifts to the children of Enzesfeld. He seemed cheerful, glowing, and in good form as he walked out into the driving snow.

During the season the duke bombarded the king at Sandringham by telephone, according to Sir Dudley Forwood, giving him fraternal advice on how to behave as monarch. This was not particularly well received. But whatever its feelings about his advice and about Wallis, the royal family didn't hesitate to convey to the duke their love and tender thoughts. However, the cost of the duke's calls, which dragged on for hours, greatly concerned the Rothschilds.

Kitty Rothschild told George Messersmith, "Edward has no sense of money. You know, we are not among the rich Rothschilds, and these telephone calls appall me." One Christmas message added fuel to the fire of the duke's enemies: the one from his friend Lloyd George, the former prime minister of England, who was vacationing in the Caribbean. Lloyd George had visited Hitler and admired the *führer* to distraction; so intense was the Nazi support surrounding him in England that the British Secret Service was watching him and his friends day and night.

On Christmas night Wallis, at the invitation of her old friend Sibyl Colefax, who had remained loyal through the crisis, went with the Rogerses to dinner at the Villa Mauresque, where Somerset Maugham, then at the height of his fame as both novelist and playwright, received them with his celebrated crocodile smile. The evening was rendered somewhat embarrassing by the drunken interruptions of his "secretary," his alcoholic lover Gerald Haxton. Asked at the inquest after a rubber of bridge why she hadn't used a king of hearts, Wallis said, "My kings don't take tricks. They only abdicate." Wallis did not particularly warm to her host, nor he to her. But he had

something in common with her and with Herman Rogers: all three had been involved in intelligence work, Maugham in World War I.

On January 1, 1937, Aunt Bessie wrote to Wallis's cousin Corinne Murray, who was now back at Pensacola, Florida, telling her of the life at Lou Viei: "The events of the past month are too big for my feeble mind to tackle," she said. She went on to say that Wallis was looking very well, but "too thin, of course," and that she should put on 6 pounds. She wished the newspapers would stop hounding Wallis; there were so many letters to answer that Bessie had to write several, like this one, herself in her place. But she did note that the tourists had stopped peeping through the gates; only the very curious were still hovering about.

Also on New Year's day the duke wrote to Wallis once again expressing his anguish and sense of strain at the separation. That night on the telephone with her, he sobbed like a child; after he had finally hung up, Wallis, clearly touched, dashed off a note to him, saying, "I couldn't bear hearing you cry."

On January 3 Wallis wrote to the duke expressing her concern at the behavior of King George VI, accusing him of being a mere pup-

pet for government forces which had removed her beloved from the throne, using her as a "convenient tool." She expressed her annoyance that her forthcoming marriage to the duke would not be mentioned in the Court Circular; this was a disappointment because she loathed the idea of being undignified and of joining "the countless titles that roam around Europe meaning nothing." She wanted the duke to write to the king giving reasons why he should not be treated as an outcast and requesting that she be given her proper title. She disclosed her disgust with the royal family as a whole for denying her any degree of dignity.

As January wore on, Wallis's worry that the divorce would not be granted did not cease. The duke was so anxious and irritable he didn't even go to a nightclub in Vienna, nor did he even attend the Rotter Bar. On January 21 Major Edward "Fruity" Metcalfe telephoned from the Grand Hotel at Kitzbühel to suggest that he might come by Schloss Enzesfeld and stop over for a visit. The duke unwisely agreed. Not only was Metcalfe a former member of the January Club, the front organization of the

British Union of Fascists, but Wallis disliked him intensely and thought him totally inefficient. She urged the duke in several notes not to be alone with him. She hadn't, it seems, been oblivious to stories about his romantic interest in the duke. The duke ignored such advice.

He went skiing with Fruity at Semmering; Metcalfe noted in letters to his wife Lady Alexandra in London that the duke was as eager and happy as a schoolboy, literally tearing off the calendar leaves as he waited to be with Wallis again. He was as insomniac as ever, seldom getting to bed before 4 a.m., and he ran Fruity, whose letters of the time have a ga-ga, breathless quality, off his feet.

All through January Wallis was writing to the duke, continuing to complain about her position as an outcast and an object of international scandal. She never ceased to grumble about the ill treatment she felt the duke was getting from the king. At the same time, she worried continuously about the presence at the schloss of Fruity Metcalfe, urging the duke not to be alone with him; possibly she was attending to rumors that Metcalfe was a romantic interest of the duke's—unlikely in view of the duke's total obsession with Wallis. The bore-

dom and notoriety were eating into her more and more deeply. In her desperation, she had turned to an astrologer in Switzerland, but the written horoscope only depressed her with its prophesy of many more obstacles.

On January 27 Wallis wrote to the duke, saying she was very distressed that Baldwin would not let the Dukes of Kent and Gloucester pay a visit to the schloss. She charged Baldwin with not only ruining the family affairs but continuing to humiliate the duke.

Wallis wrote the duke expressing fears of a possible affair with Kitty Rothschild. This was absurd. Eugene went to Paris in the third week of January, transferring most of his funds to the Paris banks, but Kitty didn't finally move out until February 2, when the duke didn't even have the grace to get out of bed to bid her farewell and to thank her for her kindnesses to him.

It was not until February 3 that the duke made a public appearance at a social occasion, attending, along with Messersmith, the Selbys, and Mrs. Miklas, a concert given by the young Australian soprano Joan Hammond. The choice of program was, to say the least, unfortunate. One *lied* by Hugo Wolf was entitled "In Retirement," and contained the words,

“Leave me alone, O World / Let my heart remain alone with its pain and its bliss.” Richard Strauss’s “Dedication” began, “You know, dear soul, that far from you I suffer. Love makes my heart sick.” In the worst taste of all was the song “The Little Foreigner” by Cyril Scott. In it, the titular figure declared that she had come from a country far away to London “to set the Thames on fire.” And the final blow to an already uncomfortable duke came in the song “The Green Hills of Somerset,” in which a refrain was, “No more we walk by your green hills, no more.”

Two days later the princess royal, the duke’s beloved sister, and her husband, the Earl of Harewood, left London for Enzesfeld. According to the *New York Times*, the reason for the visit was to discuss the duke’s financial future. Baldwin was still adamant that the duke would receive nothing from the Civil List. The princess and her husband were to bring word of this disagreeable decision and try to soothe the duke’s fevered brow. When they arrived, the duke lunched with them at the Hotel Bristol and took them on a tour of several museums. Dismayed by word that his money was frozen, he reminded the princess royal that he still had possession of Balmoral and Sandringham and

would not release the residences until he was paid. He said bitterly, referring to the ancient palace of the Austrian emperors, "If the worst comes to worse, I'll always be able to pick up a living showing people around Schönbrunn." He gave his sister and brother-in-law a free tour of the moldering edifice, pointing out the pony cart belonging to Crown Prince Rudolf, who had shot his mistress and himself in a famous double suicide. He also showed his relatives the worker apartments over which he had already embarrassed his Fascist friends in Vienna two years earlier.

In February a series of anguished letters from Wallis to the duke indicates her extreme nervousness about the future outcome of the investigation by the king's proctor into the matter of the divorce from Ernest. One of the letters, dated the seventh, was especially confused and jumbled, filled with a sense of panic. She wanted the duke to intervene with the king on the matter, obviously an impossibility. She blamed everything that had happened upon the queen, whom she had persisted in calling the Duchess of York. ("I blame it all on the wife—who hates us both.") It is quite clear from this and other letters that Wallis knew that the granting of the decree was by no

means a certainty; it might be revealed that she in fact had had a form of sexual relationship with the duke. Had she (as Michael Bloch, who edited the collected letters, avers) had only the most chaste relationship with the Duke, her letters would have assumed an entirely different character, based upon the certainty that no one would expose her in an act of adultery.

On February 12 Wallis, feeling a little better, made her 1937 social debut on the Riviera at an elaborate party given by Henry Clews, Jr., a wealthy New York socialite. The do at the Palm Beach Casino was enlivened by a commotion when some tourists who had crashed the event tried to get a peek through the curtains drawn around the table at which Wallis and the Rogerses were seated with their host and hostess. In a splendid black lace gown and pearl necklace, a present from the duke, Wallis danced twice with the Greek casino owner Nicolas Zographos.

The next day the princess royal and the Earl of Harewood left Vienna by train. The princess was in tears; the duke shouted angrily at motion picture cameramen who tried to photograph the group on the railway platform, and

police seized and smashed the cameras. It was widely believed that at the last minute the Harewoods had tried to convince the duke to break up his relationship with Wallis. Predictably, any such suggestion was abruptly rejected. But they did prevail upon him to postpone his wedding until after the coronation. And they were compelled to inform him, after talking with London, that there was still no arrangement for his financial prospects and provisions. He told Messersmith he had been treated "shabbily."

That the duke had ideas of returning to England and assuming the throne once more is indicated by a phrase in a letter dated February 18 to Wallis: "WE will be back in our full glory in less time than WE think." But on the twenty-fourth, the Duke of Kent arrived from Munich with more disappointing news about finances.

In London Joachim von Ribbentrop turned up at Buckingham Palace to present his credentials as ambassador to the king and to convey Hitler's good wishes. He told King George about German worker apartments and social reforms; the conversation was friendly and cordial. At the end of the meeting Ribbentrop gave the monarch the Nazi salute. The king

seemed barely to respond. It is clear that Hitler's purpose was to obtain the support of the royal family in England regardless of which particular member of it should happen to be on the throne. Ribbentrop convinced himself that King George's reactions were genuine.

In Vienna the Dukes of Kent and Windsor visited various museums and the Schönbrunn Palace; Kent stayed over for several days and nights. Lord Brownlow arrived from London the following day, February 26; he had been badly treated in London because he had backed the wrong royal horse. He was told not only that he would not be lord in waiting to the new king, as he had expected, but also that he was *persona non grata* at court; he claimed that men left the bar of his club when he arrived. His name was to be banned from the Court Circular. When he asked the lord chamberlain, Lord Cromer, whether he was to be turned away like a dishonest servant without notice, he was told that that expectation was correct. The fact that he had accompanied Wallis was clearly the deathblow to his career, and even to his social life.

At the same time, rumors increased to fever pitch in London and the south of France that Wallis had somehow made off with the emer-

alds bequeathed to the duke by his grandmother Queen Alexandra. The suggestion was either that she had wormed them out of the king or that he had retrieved them through the jewelry dealers Garrards in London as a present for her. There was no truth in either assumption; the emeralds were figments of the collective imagination. The truth was that whatever jewels were left by Queen Alexandra were divided up among the female members of the family and were never available to the duke at any time. But the story, which has persisted until very recently, when it has been finally quashed by Leslie Field, increased the hysteria that seemed to accompany Wallis's every move.

The Duke of Kent was obliged to say that there was no prospect of Windsor's receiving any money through the Civil List. This news, on top of his sister's, threw the duke into a deep state of anger and depression. He and Wallis argued over it for hours on the telephone, shouting at each other night after night.

On March 2 Wallis attended her first fashion show in over a year as Captain Edward Molyneux showed his spring collection at Cannes. She bought thirteen dresses and cos-

tumes, including a stunning crepe satin evening gown of grayish blue, with a jacket fastened by three mirror buttons; the most expensive item she purchased was a silver-fox coat made of ten skins used lengthwise in straight bands. She wore it to another party at the Somerset Maugham villa that weekend.

The fear of assassination intensified in March. Wallis received another threatening letter; she was once again advised by Kenneth de Courcy of the existence of an organization determined to eliminate her, an organization that would be well paid for the killing.

There was talk that Wallis and the duke would move to the United States. The duke even began some preliminary negotiations to buy Cloisters, an immense castellated residence owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sumner A. Parker outside Baltimore. Nothing eventuated. Finally, on March 9, Wallis left with the Rogerses for Charles Bedaux's Château de Candé; she was accompanied by her maid, Mary Burke, and by twenty-seven pieces of luggage. She stored the rest of her possessions brought from England at the Villa Lou Viei. Charles Bedaux was in the United States at the time, staying at his apartment on Fifth Avenue; Fern Bedaux had broken off a trip to London and worked with tre-

mendous concentration for over a week to prepare for her celebrated guest. An army of servants, augmented by local villagers, had scrubbed and repainted and dusted the ancient edifice virtually round the clock. The Buick, which had been garaged for most of the previous weeks while Wallis used the Rogerses' car, swept up the hill to the château's immense, arabesque doorway with its iron handles. At the ring of the hand-pulled doorbell, the door creaked open to disclose a vast hallway lined by twenty-two members of the staff, all of them uniformed. At their head was Hale, the English butler, dressed impeccably in a hand-tailored suit from Savile Row. The liveried footmen wore royal-blue and gold coats, black trousers, and gold-buckled shoes. The maids were in floor-length, black silk dresses with frilly caps and aprons, and the housekeeper was equipped with a large chatelaine of keys. Chandeliers were glowing from the ceiling on this gloomy, wet Wednesday afternoon. Ten thousand francs' worth of bought flowers sprang from crystal vases. Wallis was accommodated in Fern's own bedroom, which was decorated in orchid silk and satin and overlooked the somber woods and countryside.

Exhausted by the journey, Wallis spent her

first day resting in her room. When she took a step out of doors at dusk, the rain was so heavy she quickly returned. She called the duke several times during her first twenty-four hours there.

She gave a press conference in the library, carefully avoiding any mention of her marriage plans. Asked, rather oddly in the circumstances, for her views on the Spanish civil war, in which Fascist and Communist forces were locked in a deadly conflict, she was clever enough to say, "I'm sorry for both sides. It will be the ruin of beautiful Spain." Several reporters noted that she was wearing an enormous sapphire engagement ring on the third finger of her left hand; apparently, she had tired of the Mogul emerald engagement ring the duke had given her on the night of the granting of her decree at Ipswich and wanted a jewel that was closer to the color of her eyes.

During her next few days Wallis accustomed herself to the atmosphere of the Château de Candé. She studied everything Fern Bedaux did with the utmost care; she told Fern that the Château was the best-run house she had ever stayed in. Fern, a tall, elegant, exquisitely groomed product of Grand Rapids, came from old money and ran her household with superb

expertise. She was also quite a stern taskmistress: if one of the maids or manservants was heard talking or giggling outside the kitchen, the offender was immediately sent below stairs. Hale was a fussy but skillful major domo as well as butler. Briskly, with much slapping together of his hands, he ordered about the two footmen, the ladies' maids, the upstairs maid, the downstairs maid, and the scullery maid; the only part of the house where he was not in command was the kitchen. That was the domain of Legros, who had formerly been the chef of the Duke of Alba, a chief financier of Franco; Legros was considered virtually matchless, and his three-star cuisine would have done justice to any fine restaurant in Paris. After the mediocrity of the cooking of the Rogerses' couple, Wallis was at last able to eat some decent food.

Bedaux and his architects had modernized the castle, covering the furniture with eighteenth-century patterned linens that had been found on rolls in the attic when he bought the house from its previous owners, run-down French aristocrats. He had also installed new plumbing, heating, and vast furnaces in the basement. Wallis's bathroom had heated platinum-plated towel rails and an enormous tub

equipped with massive gold taps. There was even a gilded fountain to keep newly bought fish fresh; fish were always bought alive for the Château de Candé.

Dinner parties at the château were small but formal and done with great style. Two cloths were put on for evening meals. The first layer was a cloth of gold; the second was fine Brussels lace. The effect was beautiful; the gold shone through under the glistening light of the candelabra. Meals were served by Hale and the flunkies in livery. The monogrammed china and silver were of the finest quality. An individual menu was written out in copperplate for each guest and placed on a tiny silver rest in front of him or her. If Hale didn't like someone, he would turn the tray offered from the left so that the guest got the worst piece of fowl or fish; and he would never top the wine of someone he hated unless he was specifically asked to do so. The fowl were brought to the table "dressed" (with their feathers on) so everyone could see and feel them. Then they were cooked and served.

After dinner, for smaller occasions, Hale would put dance music records on the radiogramophone. For larger events Marcel Dupré, the best-known organist of his day, would per-

form at the enormous Skinner movie-theater organ in the living room, its bronze pipes carefully hidden under oak paneling, the music of Bach and Handel emerging through a grille. Sometimes, Fern Bedaux would take her guests to the small pavilion in the grounds, a tiny lodge rather like a shooting box. There, Wallis and her friends would join in card games or roll up the carpet and dance to the wind-up phonograph. Fern would stand on the sidelines, not joining in. Wallis could not have been more content in this sumptuous environment. Even her fastidious tastes were satisfied at last.

Meantime, on March 18 there was at last some action on the matter of the divorce. The king's proctor, Sir Thomas Barnes, announced that the case would be discussed in court the following day. Sir Boyd Merriman, president of the Divorce Court, would hear the matter at 10:30 a.m. Attorney General Sir Donald Somervell would appear to report the result of the investigations by the king's proctor. Surprisingly, neither Ernest nor Wallis was required to be present. Wallis had a sleepless night over this, but in fact she need not have worried. Somervell announced in court that he had found no ground for an intervention and that there was no basis whatsoever for any pos-

sible belief that the divorce was collusive. The judge asked if Francis Stephenson, the clerk who had entered a complaint charging that there were irregularities in the original procedures, was there. Stephenson responded that he was indeed. Small, round-shouldered, with a drooping gray mustache, he admitted he had taken legal action on December 9. He confirmed, however, that he no longer had any reason for complaint and asked that his original charges be permanently stricken from the record. Asked by newspapermen as he left the building why he had taken the action in the first place, he snapped, "You can go on wondering! Go away! I have other fish to fry!" It seemed obvious that he had been put up to his appointed task of disrupting the divorce, but had withdrawn because of his feelings as a loyal subject. The irony of course was that the divorce in fact *was* collusive; the wonder is that nobody was able to prove it.

There would still be some time before the decree absolute would be granted. Nevertheless, Wallis was greatly relieved to hear that there were no major obstacles from now on. The duke was equally pleased with the news, but he was as restless and fretful as ever; having virtually forced Kitty out of her own home, he

was burdened by the problems of running Schloss Enzesfeld and began making plans to move.

Sir Walford Selby and Dudley Forwood found him a new residence: the small hotel, Appesbach House, near St. Wolfgang in the Salzkammergut lake district of Austria; it had a private bathing beach, a boat landing stage, a tennis court, and a good view of water and mountains. In the previous few weeks the duke had acquired no less than seventeen staff members, including several maids and a valet, two-thirds of whom he was compelled to dismiss. He was suffering from a bad toothache and had flown in Dr. Sumner Moore from Wimpole Street, London, to take care of the problem. His ear continued to bother him despite the numerous ministrations of Dr. Neumann. His mood was scarcely helped by the fact that Winston Churchill was still running into every possible obstacle in London on the question of the money.

By March, the duke's letters to Wallis had become almost literally hysterical. "God's curses be on the heads of those English bitches who dare to insult you!" he wrote.

On the twenty-second he wrote to Wallis saying that one day he would "get back at all

those swine [in England]" and make them realize "how disgustingly and unsportingly they have behaved."

On March 28 the duke was given a farewell in the form of a torchlight procession in the village of Enzesfeld. School children, followed by members of the local fire department and constabulary, walked through the streets and up to the castle with torches held high, chanting in unison and providing a concert of local traditional music. The next morning the duke drove to St. Wolfgang. He was accompanied by Sir Godfrey Thomas and by Dudley Forwood. On arrival at Appesbach House, the duke walked out onto his bedroom balcony, staring moodily at the mountains in their veil of early spring mist. He was accompanied by his new Cairn terrier, Schnuki; Slipper had already been sent to Wallis by train. He spent the next days climbing in the mountains with Forwood and visiting local monasteries and the summer residence of the late Emperor Franz Josef. His love of the Teutonic scenery and fascination with the relics of the Hapsburgs were characteristic. He was still moving behind the scenes for the restoration of the Archduke Otto to the Austrian throne.

On March 31 Wallis wrote to the duke once

again attacking his “wretched brother” and suggesting that if the treatment continued the duke should announce to the world the ill-treatment he had received. She advised the duke to make the king “ashamed of himself—if possible.”

On April 8 Slipper, who had a tendency to run around looking for rats and mice, had strayed onto the golf course near the Chateau Candé and was bitten to death by a viper. “Now the principal guest of the wedding is no more,” Wallis wrote in agony to the duke. He responded in kind, saying, “My heart is quite breaking this morning my beloved sweetheart from sadness.” They were both devastated by the loss; Wallis couldn’t bear the thought of burying the animal, so Herman Rogers took care of it. Lady Mendl and her favorite Johnny McMullen came down to the château to console Wallis.\* Wallis had other troubles: Fern went off to Paris and London for the visit she had interrupted to receive Wallis, and Wallis was not entirely comfortable living with only the staff for company. Moreover, she was perplexed by the question of her birth records. For

\* Yet ungratefully Wallis failed to invite either of them to the wedding.

over a month she had been plaguing Aunt Bessie to get her a certificate of some kind, as required by French law, but of course this was not forthcoming. At last, the enterprising Aunt Bessie found a solution. She would contact the young doctor, Lewis M. Allen, who had been rushed to Blue Ridge Summit to take care of the birth. He signed an affidavit stating the date and time of Wallis's arrival.

On April 25, 212 East Biddle Street, Baltimore, was opened as a museum. Wallis's bedroom was prominently displayed; 150 people peered into it in groups of six after making their way up the narrow staircase. As it happened, none of the original furniture remained; only the kitchen, with its coal-burning Franklin stove, was more or less the same.

The duke was perturbed by the publication of a book entitled *Coronation Commentary* by Geoffrey Dennis, published by William Heinemann in London. The duke claimed that the book libeled him, even though today it seems entirely harmless. He actually sued, through the offices of George Allen, successfully seeking to enjoin the publishers against the book's appearance. At the same time, Wallis dropped her suit against Newbold Noyes, her cousin by marriage, in the matter of his articles in the

American and French newspapers. Armand Gregoire remained her lawyer.

On April 14 Wallis wrote the most revealing of all her letters to the duke. She stated, referring to the king, "Well who cares let him be pushed off the throne." No doubt she expressed sentiments of this sort at dinner tables on the Riviera, ensuring the permanent disfavor in which she would be held at the palace. Read in conjunction with the duke's threats in an earlier letter to return to England and resume the throne ("WE will be back in our glory sooner than WE think") and his plans, which would soon be announced to a London journalist, to form a republic in England with himself as president and Wallis as first lady, it is clear that her statement, seditious from a naturalized British citizen, is not to be taken lightly.

At the end of April Lord Wigram advised Winston Churchill that the king personally guaranteed he would take care of the duke's income in the future. Lloyd George was given a similar assurance. As a result, neither Churchill nor Lloyd George brought the matter up before the Civil List Committee. The duke was greatly relieved to hear the news. But there were still problems to face. British law required

that the wedding of British citizens must take place at a local consulate, not at a private residence. Furthermore, it would be virtually impossible to find a British Anglican clergyman to perform the ceremony. By this stage, investigations made by Baldwin's detectives must have established the lack of legitimate birth or a baptismal certificate; in addition, under British law the marriage could not take place until six months had elapsed from the original divorce decree. Nevertheless, Wallis pressed forward with her plans. Since she couldn't face the reporters, she asked for various Paris designers to send her their latest creations for examination for her trousseau. Squadrons of couturier assistants arrived to show her an extraordinary variety of morning, afternoon, and evening clothes. Among those who submitted originals to her were Schiaparelli, Mainbocher, and Chanel. She finally decided to give Mainbocher the authorization to dress her for the wedding itself; his rivals supplied the trousseau.

Mainbocher named her wedding gown's color "Wallis blue." She had a total of sixty-six dresses, including several of a bold, not to say vulgar, design with patterns of lobsters and butterflies on white or silver backgrounds. These were in seemingly deliberate contrast to the

image she had of being exquisitely tasteful at all times.

Much of the concern that the crucial figures in the Windsor matter felt was expressed in a confidential note, sent from Buckingham Palace, written by Alexander Hardinge to Sir Robert Vansittart. Dated May 1, 1937, it read as follows:

My dear Van,

As I told you during our talk yesterday, The King was asked by both Phipps and Selby for instructions as to the attitude which they should adopt in their relations with the Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Simpson, after their marriage.

They wanted to know what His Majesty's wishes would be as regards their entertainment, either official or private, or their participation in official ceremonies of any kind.

The King realizes that in the future his representatives may be faced with problems of this sort at very short notice, and it would, in his Majesty's opinion, be desirable that, as far as possible, they should be given instructions in advance.

The King would therefore be obliged if you would kindly submit suggestions for dealing with the different situations which, in your opinion, are most likely to arise.

Vansittart replied on May 4, as follows:

Very many thanks for your letter of the 1st about the Duke of Windsor.

I entirely agree with the King, if I may respectfully say so, in thinking that H.R.H. should be given as much guidance as is possible in a matter which is entirely without precedent and bristling with every conceivable sort of problem.

Having said this, I need not expatiate upon the difficulty of giving suitable advice or excuse myself for the coarsity of the suggestions which I feel able to make in the circumstances.

Such as these are, they divide themselves into two categories: (1) official, (2) private. As for (1)—e.g., when the Duke and Duchess (to be) are present in a Capital where an official reception is to be given and the question arises whether steps should be taken to see that they are invited to it—I should say that the only course to follow is for H.M. representatives concerned to ask special instructions in every

case, as to which we should of course consult you.

As regards (2), my feeling is that these cases might be left to the discretion of the man in charge at the moment, with the option, of course, of asking for advice if he needs it. . . . What I think we ought to avoid, if we can, is a situation in which the Duke might ask an ambassador or minister to put him and his wife up for a visit. I don't suppose this is likely to arise. Misconceptions might be created if it did, particularly if any interviews or contacts with political personages took place during the stay. . . . As a general line, Eden feels that our representatives should treat the Duke of Windsor and his wife rather as they would a member of the Royal Family on a holiday; but that if anything were contemplated which might give to the visit a more serious aspect, our representatives must necessarily refer home. . . . In any case, we shall need instructions or confirmation from the King.

Two matters emerge from the somewhat veiled wording used here by Vansittart. First, that there was real fear that the Duke and Wallis would make untoward political connections through their use of the facilities of embassies in different capitals, and second, that then, as

later, every one of the decisions vis-à-vis the Windsors came directly from the king. It is only possible to reach the latter conclusion to-day, when these crucially important letters have at last become available.

On May 2 villagers at St. Wolfgang turned out en masse for a celebration in honor of the duke. They provided an elaborate pageant of local history, in traditional costumes, the mountainside glittering with a giant swastika that appeared to be on fire. When the duke inquired with false naïveté why this Nazi symbol was being used, he was told, no doubt with a touch of cynical local humor, "It is a demonstration of our sentiments." On May 3 Sir Boyd Merriman, with little ado, made the divorce absolute in London. Within minutes reporters dashed to the telephones to call the duke in Austria. He was overjoyed and immediately had his staff pack up everything; without waiting one more instant than he had to, he drove to Salzburg to join the express train for Paris. He boarded at 4:45 p.m., carrying in his arms two wrapped gifts for Wallis, one a bouquet of edelweiss and the other a dirndl. His private car was crammed with the seventeen

suitcases that he refused to put in the luggage van; it was almost impossible to move. He was accompanied only by his detective bodyguard Storrier and a valet; the other members of his staff would follow by separate train. Dr. Allen's affidavit of Wallis's birth arrived via the French consul at the local British Legation the same afternoon. And also on the same day the Civil List was published in London with no mention of the duke.

On May 4, 1937, the duke arrived at Verneuil l'Etang, a small town some 45 kilometers from Paris; Sir Eric Phipps, now ambassador to France, had arranged for the *Orient Express* to be stopped there and for Lloyd Thomas, who much admired the duke, to meet him on the platform. The station was cleared, and the newsreel camera team and reporters who had penetrated the thick veil of secrecy surrounding the arrival were forbidden to the station. He left the train with his equerry, Captain Greenacre, the ever-present Storrier, and several newspaper reporters who had traveled in the adjoining car. The duke, in very good spirits, chatted briefly with the officers of the *Sûreté* who were there to guard his safety and left almost at once for the Château de Candé,

escorted by a police car and two *gardes mobiles* on motorcycles.

A crowd was waiting at the gates of the Château de Candé as the duke drove up and rapturously embraced Wallis. Charles Bedaux had arrived a week earlier from New York. Chunky, jug-eared, with the face of a prizefighter who had received several batterings in the ring, Bedaux endeared himself immediately to Wallis and the duke. With enormous charm, charisma, and energy, he had risen from penury as a tunnel sandhog in New York City, building, with intensity, a million-dollar business. His highly controversial "Bedaux B-unit system," intended to improve efficiency in factories and offices, had greatly helped management in a number of major companies while provoking considerable criticism among the more left-wing elements in the unions for its alleged exhausting effects. Although frequently accused of being pro-Nazi, Bedaux probably had no more time for Hitler or Mussolini than he did for President Roosevelt or Stanley Baldwin. He was characteristic of the internationalistic, pragmatic adventurer-businessmen of the era, crossing all frontiers, ignoring wars as temporary inconveniences, doing business with any-

one who would do business with them. His Bedaux German company had been confiscated, and he was now in the process of trying to win it back. In the course of his efforts, he had become friendly with another skillful internationalist, Hitler's adjutant and World War I commanding officer, the polished and ingenuous Fritz Wiedemann.

It was in those first weeks at the Château de Candé that the duke, through Wiedemann, made direct contact with Hitler, asking if it would be convenient to arrange a visit to Germany to study labor conditions there. It was typical of the duke's effrontery and defiance of Buckingham Palace that he would wish to undertake such a mission. It was understood that Ribbentrop was received, as was customary in the case of all ambassadors, by his brother the king and that Anthony Eden, who continued as foreign secretary, was pursuing a policy of not provoking the *führer*; however, for any member of the royal family to embark upon such a visit to Hitler could only cause the utmost distress in Whitehall. The British were still playing for time, hoping to strengthen Britain's position in terms of its military resources while seemingly not disapproving of

the Nazi regime. And it was feared that, embittered as he was, the duke might do that.

Simultaneously, he rashly selected as his honeymoon residence the Castle Wasserle-onburg in southern Austria, which was owned by Count Paul Munster, husband of Margaret (Peggy) Ward, who was related to the duke's former mistress Mrs. Dudley Ward. Munster, another member of the January Club with dual British and German citizenship, was on Vansittart's watch list. It seemed the duke was almost deliberately trying to provoke the interest of the Secret Intelligence Service.

The duke asked Sir Eric Phipps to request the French government to grant a special dispensation that would enable the mayor of Monts to perform the civil ceremony at the château instead of the town hall in order to minimize publicity and overcrowding. This was approved.

At Candé Wallis and the duke, their bedrooms discreetly at opposite ends of the château, spent the time playing golf and cards and chatting with their host and hostess. Now that they were reunited, they seemed to all observers to be very happy. The Bedauxes left them alone for several days, allowing them to enjoy

their pleasure in each other in seclusion. They even posed for photographs on the lawn and talked in a relaxed and gracious manner with reporters.

# WEDDING OF THE DECADE

The coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was set for May 12. It was, of course, out of the question for the Duke of Windsor and his "mistress" to attend it. On May 7 the duke and Wallis made their first motor trip out of the château. They were chased by newsreel cameramen to the village of Semblancay, where the news teams were perilously perched upon the rooftops, shouting back and refusing to budge when the local police told them to get down. The couple had lunch at an inn and then continued to the village of Vendôme, where they met with U.S. Consul

George Tate at the Grand Hotel. He gave Wallis the sworn statement by the doctor on the circumstances of her birth—described as “a birth certificate” in the press. As though seriously preparing for a more responsible role as a married man, the duke cut out hard liquor, replacing it with wine.

The Castle Wasserleonburg was being prepared for the couple’s arrival; a new tennis court was laid and the driveway, which was badly potholed, was carefully repaired. Among those who arrived at Candé to offer their congratulations were Lady Brownlow, Mrs. Ronald Greville, Mrs. Richard Norton, and the duke’s equerry, Captain W. D. C. Greenacre, just returned from leave in London. The following day Wallis completed arrangements to alter her name back to Wallis Warfield by deed poll. In her application for a marriage license, she declared herself “single.”

The duke still retained a futile hope that the Dukes of Kent and Gloucester and his sister Mary would attend the wedding, with Kent as best man. On May 11 he announced his formal engagement to Wallis at last, strategically timing the press conference at Candé to occur on the eve of his brother’s crowning in Westminster Abbey. Wallis displayed the Mogul Emer-

ald in her engagement ring; the sapphire had fallen out of favor. Mainbocher arrived with his staff for the third fitting of her wedding gown. The couple was now informed that the French government, on grounds of courtesy to the British government, would not permit the wedding to be broadcast on the radio. When CBS and NBC applied, they were informed that any attempt to bring microphones to the château would be stopped by police action. On the evening of the twelfth, Wallis and the duke listened to King George's hesitant postcoronation broadcast; outside, a heavy rainstorm lashed the château while the duke knitted a blue sweater for Wallis, plying the needles busily. Neither Wallis nor the duke felt inclined to toast the speech as millions were doing all over the world. A telegram arrived at the château close to midnight, announcing that Aunt Bessie had sailed on the U.S. liner *President Roosevelt*. Lelia Barnett made the mistake of giving Aunt Bessie a copy of *Coronation Commentary* for a good-bye present.

In the subsequent days question arose of whether Wallis would be given the title "Her Royal Highness." For weeks the duke had been pestering the palace for approval of this. Walter Monckton was doing his best, and so was

Winston Churchill, but their efforts were futile. It was determined that the marriage was invalid in the eyes of the church, which did not recognize divorce. The duke was seeking an announcement of the marriage in *The London Gazette*, which normally contained listings of weddings of which the king approved. There was no response from the palace on the matter.

Wallis and the duke did not fail to note a most ominous event in London. Count Grandi describes it:

Something occurred which greatly embittered our national relationship with Great Britain. As we know, the former King had refused to recognize Emperor Haile Selassie on the ground that he did not wish to provoke Mussolini. But, King George VI invited the former Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Coronation. When Mussolini found this out, he was furious. He impulsively stopped the Prince and Princess of Piedmont, members of the Italian Royal Family, from attending. The British Government interpreted this withdrawal as a deep offense to the Crown of England.

The Prince and Princess of Piedmont were, as we know, great friends of the Duke of

Windsor. It must have been clear to the duke that everything he had feared vis-à-vis the breakdown of relations between Mussolini and the British government was coming true.

On May 16 Wallis and the duke were guests of their friends the Grafton W. Minots, wealthy socialites of Boston and New York, at a nearby château. During dinner, as the hostess toasted the happy couple, a bolt of lightning struck the electrical plant next door, ominously plunging everybody in the dining room into gloom. The next night Dudley Forwood set sail for England to escort Aunt Bessie to the château.

On May 19, in Paris, the duke visited the president of the French republic, whom he knew well from the occasion of the funeral of the assassinated M. Doumer and from a luncheon at the president's residence at Rambouillet. At the meeting, he discussed his views on maintaining peace in Europe.

That same day the final word arrived from Buckingham Palace that the king and the prime minister would not permit any member of the royal family to attend the wedding, a depressing end to almost three and a half months of negotiations. For some reason, Wallis decided that she would invite no member of

her own family, apart from Aunt Bessie, to the nuptials. Perhaps she felt that to include her cousins Corinne and Lelia and their families would be offensive to Whitehall, or possibly she was still so disaffected with Newbold Noyes, married to Lelia, over his articles that she would not consider inviting him.

The wedding date was set for June 3. By what one hopes was an unfortunate coincidence, this was the date of King George V's birth. On May 16, Wallis and the duke signed their marriage contract, guaranteeing that their property would be entirely separate and that no claim would be made on either in the event of a divorce. At first, it was announced by Herman Rogers that there would be no religious ceremony, only a civil marriage performed by Charles Mercier, mayor of the nearby village of Monts. This decision, however, was quickly reversed. There was talk that the Reverend C. H. D. Grimes, rector of the Anglican church of Vienna, would officiate; the duke had read a Bible lesson for him the previous December. The archbishop of Canterbury intervened and Grimes withdrew. The wedding ring of Welsh gold, similar to that worn by several English queens, was brought from Paris. One of the first to see it was the millionaire Cornelius Van-

derbilt, Jr., who, in an incongruous touch, declined to stay in the château itself, lodging himself instead in a large American trailer outside the main gate. The vulgarity of this action did not escape the attention of the French press.

On May 25 Mayor Mercier rehearsed Wallis and the duke for the civil ceremony in the music room of the château. The couple was still without a minister. When a Liverpool parson offered to preside, the archbishop of York expressly forbade him. Aunt Bessie arrived, delayed in Paris by a cold, and bustled around the château with astonishing energy, causing consternation among the staff. She even dared usurp the supreme power of the omnipotent Hale. An old friend of Wallis's, Constance Atherton, arrived from Baltimore. She wrote to a friend of hers on May 28, "I have never seen anyone as happy as the Duke—like a boy let out of school. He is gay, carefree, laughing, and terribly in love." At lunch, which he rarely attended ("His Royal Highness is doing you a great honor, Constance, as he never comes to lunch as a rule," Wallis said), he complained cheerfully about the weather, which had stopped him from playing golf, and said he hadn't enjoyed staying with the Rothschilds

because he didn't like Kitty. When Constance asked him if he would want to race horses, he replied, "I can't. I'm too poor. But the one thing I would like to have if I had a lot of money is a nice yacht." After the coffee stage Hale and two liveried footmen arrived with silver trays completely covered by letters. "How many are there today?" Wallis asked. "Only four hundred and fifty," Hale replied. The letters were filled with poems, music, photographs, insults, threats, and requests for everything imaginable, including a discarded pair of shoes. The phone rang forty times in two hours. Representatives of Van Cleef and Arpels arrived from Paris with trays of jewels, followed by a case of gems, an inscribed gold box from Hitler, an onyx-and-diamond clock from Herman and Katherine Rogers, and costly gifts from Mussolini, Ciano, and Alberto da Zara of China days. Dinner that night was hot dogs and ginger beer. Randolph Churchill came to dinner. Constance Atherton wrote:

[The duke] wore a Scottish plaid of the Black Watch—black and green kilts, and a sort of white shirt,—very smart, and she had . . . such jewels: two huge leaves or feathers on the left side of her dress, one in diamonds and the

other in rubies, diamond-and-ruby earrings, and diamond-and-ruby bracelets and a ruby ring.

. . . After dinner we went into the living room. . . . Suddenly [the duke] noticed that Wallis's slipper was undone, and he went down on both knees and tied it up. I caught Randolph Churchill's eye at this moment, and his expression was amusing to say the least.

When Constance went to bed at 1:30 a.m., quite exhausted from the long evening, Wallis and the duke banged on the door, announced they had come to see if she was all right, sat down on the edge of the bed, and started the conversation all over again. The duke announced that the lamp was badly situated for reading, got down on all fours on the floor, and crawled about, fixing wires and plugs until the lamp was in a better place. It was typical of his almost childlike naturalness, contrasted with his sophistication and guile.

On May 29 *The London Gazette* printed the following devastating announcement:

The King has been pleased by letters patent under the great seal of the realm, bearing the date of the 27th of May, 1937, to declare that the Duke of Windsor shall, notwithstanding as

instrument of abdication, executed on the 10th day of December, 1936, and His Majesty's Declaration of the Abdication Act of 1936, whereby effect was given to the said instrument, be entitled to hold and enjoy for himself only the title, style or attribute of Royal Highness so however that his wife and descendants, if any, shall not hold said title, style or attribute.

This decision had been reached at a meeting of the cabinet. Prime Minister Baldwin had refused to sit on the matter, and in his place the home secretary, Sir John Simon, strongly influenced the setting of the unfortunate precedent. Queen Victoria is said to have issued an edict laying down the principle that the title "Royal Highness" was to be enjoyed only by relatives of the reigning monarch. But, in fact, this edict had been overridden in at least two famous cases. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was a commoner as Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, but she had been granted the title "Her Royal Highness" when she became Duchess of York. Lady Alice Montagu Douglas-Scott had also assumed that title when she married the Duke of Gloucester. To this day, no satisfactory documentation has been produced to sup-

port a legal basis for the denial of the title to Wallis; in fact, she and the duke spent the rest of their lives ignoring the gazetted notice. The duke insisted—with what to many was an irritating degree of persistence—upon Wallis's being called “Your Royal Highness” by everyone, and he demanded that she be curtseyed to both in private and on public occasions. In many cases, ladies obeyed his command only to please him, fully aware of the fact that their action might bring displeasure at the palace. Wallis was never curtseyed to by members of the queen's household. Members of foreign royal families were forbidden to do so. Wallis used the royal insignia, either a coronet surmounted by a lion rampant or a monogram of two entwined Ws under a royal coronet on her stationery. She and the duke took the view that she was entitled as his wife to use whatever royal imprints she chose. There were many who disagreed. It was not until 1972 that the College of Arms would officially authorize her use of the royal coronet, and then only after the death of the duke.

“The wedding will be very small,” Aunt Besie wrote to Corinne in Washington, D.C., on May 31. “Wallis is very well. Thin, but she looks splendidly and she is in fine spirits.” On

May 30 Helena Normanton of the *New York Times* boldly asked Wallis about her Nazi connections. Wallis replied, quite contradicting Mary Kirk Raffray, "I cannot recall ever being in Herr von Ribbentrop's company more than twice, once at a party at Lady Cunard's before he became Ambassador, and once at another big reception. I was never alone in his company, and I never had more than a few words of conversation with him—simply the usual small talk, that is all. I took no interest at all in politics." Miss Normanton did not have the temerity to question this statement.

More wedding guests began to arrive on June 1. They included Hugh Lloyd Thomas, first secretary of the British Embassy in Paris; Lady (Walford) Selby; Walter Monckton; Fruity and Alexandra Metcalfe; the Eugene Rothschilds; George Allen; and Dudley Forwood. At the last minute, a clergyman had been found to officiate: the Reverend R. Anderson Jardine, vicar of St. Paul's Church of Darlington, in the county of Durham. Although it was claimed that Charles Bedaux had bribed Jardine to defy his church and conduct the ceremony, in fact Jardine had volunteered by letter. Despite dire threats from his bishop and from the archbishop of York, he made his

way to the château and began working on the arrangements immediately. Jardine had become infuriated by the press announcement that there would be no religious ceremony; abandoning his breakfast, he paced agitatedly around the room, went to his garden, and entered an old army tent, where he sank to his knees in prayer. When he rose to his feet, his mind was made up: he would write to Herman Rogers congratulating the duke and stating that he would be prepared to officiate. That Sunday morning, while he was conducting the children's services, he received a telegram from George Allen asking him to call. The following day he met in London with Allen, who arranged his passport with amazing speed and in the utmost secrecy. The next morning he boarded the boat train. After a brief stay in Paris he was picked up at the local station and driven to the château by the duke's chauffeur.

Cecil Beaton was already there, taking photographs of Wallis and the duke. The Rogerses had entertained Beaton with after-dinner films of Peking, the *Nahlin* cruise, and Wallis's stay at Balmoral. The château was in a turmoil as Constance Spry, the famous florist from London, arrived with her assistant to decorate the residence with flower displays. Wallis watched

everything carefully; she was visibly exhausted by the strain of the occasion. But the duke looked fit and sunburned and very happy. The Reverend Jardine drove up. The Rogerses met him at the front steps. Rogers said to him as he shook his hand, "Thank God you have arrived. Now I shall have something to say to the Press."

A few minutes later Rogers read to the crowd of reporters in French and English the astonishing statement that the civil ceremony would be followed by a religious one. This turned the tables on a newspaper hoax that had been proposed, in which the columnist Logan Glendenning would suddenly turn up, wearing a clerical outfit, and perform a fake wedding which would be instantly declared a practical joke. Photographs had even been planned for this vicious leg-pull. The would-be hoaxers were dumbfounded by Rogers's announcement.

Jardine was introduced to the duke and Wallis by George Allen. The duke, dressed in open-neck shirt and shorts, said to Jardine, "Why wouldn't they give us a religious ceremony? We are both Christians. . . . You are the only one who had the guts to do this for me." Jardine gave a prayer book to Wallis; then everybody

began searching for an appropriate "holy table" in the absence of an altar. In the frantic hunt somebody broke an Italian lamp. Finally, Jardine discovered a hall chest. The problem was that it was faced with plump nude nymphs holding up a fake Renaissance carving. Protesting against the chest's vulgarity, Wallis managed to find a cream-colored, embroidered silk tea cloth from one of her linen trunks, and she and Katherine began draping the chest to cover the offending nudes. George Allen came in with two silver candlesticks, but Wallis rejected them as they were to be used for dinner. Jardine asked if there was a cross available. Charles Bedaux replied that he had several, but all of them showed the Christ figure. Jardine refused to have a crucifix. The duke suggested contacting the British Embassy or even London for a suitable cross. Another crucifix arrived and was rejected. Finally, Charles Bedaux obtained a plain cross from a local church.

There was a hunt for cushions for the couple to kneel on. Beaton took shots of the duke in Wallis's room, followed by photographs of the couple. The session continued after lunch and well into the afternoon. As the duke and Wallis were standing before a turret window for the wedding shots, a communication from Walter

Monckton arrived stating that the duke's last-minute appeal to his brother on the matter of "Her Royal Highness" had failed. Forwood remembers that the duke, upon hearing the devastating news, burst into tears and buried his golden head in Forwood's chest. (According to another version, the duke had been apprised of the decision by Monckton in person, but it is possible that even if that was the case he had appealed against it one last time and this final rejection broke him.) However, the duke pulled himself together and continued to cooperate with Beaton. When he left that night, Beaton was appalled to discover that a conventional photographer for the London *Evening Standard* had published a photograph ahead of him. Forwood was under great pressure from reporters. He remembers one saying to him, "Do you think the duke has fucked Mrs. Simpson yet?" Forwood replied, "I haven't been in the bed." The reporters laughed. Forwood continued, "Right up to the last minute the duke hoped that his brothers the Dukes of Kent and Gloucester would come, that somehow the Royal Family would relent. But they did not. He was deeply, deeply hurt."

There was a prewedding dinner. Everyone at

the table was in the best of spirits. Charles Bedaux sat at the head, the duke at the lower end. After separating, the men for brandy and cigars and the women for light conversation, the guests gathered in the library for a recital by Marcel Dupré. Bored as usual by music, the duke left the recital, drew Jardine aside, and questioned him, with surprisingly detailed knowledge, on the problems of poverty and unemployment in Durham.

Thursday, June 3, at last arrived. The weather was perfect. "King's weather," many of the press called it, not quite appropriately. By 7 a.m. a complete ring of police surrounded the château. There were many detectives of the Sûreté. The government had forbidden planes to fly overhead. The entire village of Monts was lined up along the avenue of pines that led to the gates. Jardine went to see the duke at 7:15. He was, Jardine wrote, "as happy as a schoolboy." "I suppose I should have a prayer book," the duke said, and ran out and fetched one given to him by his mother when he was a child. With tears in his eyes, he showed Jardine the loving message inscribed in it. By contrast, Lady Alexandra Metcalfe later recalled that

Wallis looked hard, cold, and quietly triumphant now that her hour had arrived.

The civil service took place at 11:42 a.m. Only four newspapermen were permitted to witness the ceremony. The duke's wedding gift to Wallis was a diamond tiara. The duke wore a black morning coat and striped trousers, with a white carnation in his buttonhole. Wallis looked almost too stiff and formal in Mainbocher's box-shouldered blue outfit. She wore matching jewelry: diamond-and-sapphire brooch, bracelet, and earrings. The nearsighted Mayor Mercier was extremely nervous. The duke kept clasping and unclasping his fingers behind his back. The religious service followed. Above the holy table stood two golden candelabra with sixty-two candles apiece. Two more candles flanked the gilt ormolu mirror at the back of the improvised altar. Marcel Dupré struck up the strains of Handel's "Wedding March" from *Judas Maccabeus*. During the benediction Dupré played "O Perfect Love." Only the duke's excessively loud and high-pitched "I will" disrupted the composed atmosphere of the ceremony. The wedding ring, of gold mined from the Welsh hills,\* made Wallis

\* A platinum copy was auctioned in 1987 at Sotheby's.

the Duchess of Windsor. There was no incense, no choir, no pomp. Yet no one who witnessed this occasion would ever forget it.

As Herman Rogers walked out to the porch to announce that the wedding was over, and the couple joined their guests in a buffet lunch of lobster, salad, chicken à la king, and strawberries, the elderly French housekeeper took a bottle of champagne and ritually broke it against the gate, a local tradition; with characteristic neatness, she then removed the broken glass with a broom. Rogers managed to extract a promise from the reporters that they would not pursue the newlyweds to the train station.

Back in England *The Church Times*, the clerics of St. Paul's Anglican Church at Darlington, and several religious bodies condemned Jardine's action outright. He returned to England to a blizzard of criticism and, unswervingly loyal to the duke and duchess, he decided in the face of widespread criticism to leave his parsonage and make his way to the United States, where he and his wife opened a modest house of religion which they called the Windsor Cathedral of Los Angeles. They were deported back to England for overstaying their visas in 1942.

Forwood will never forget the events that

followed the wedding. The duke and duchess and their large entourage made their way in a convoy of cars to join the *Simplon-Orient Express* at Laroche-Migennes. They were accompanied by two armed motorcyclists in uniform and a car filled with French gendarmes. Another car was filled with English detectives, including Storrier. Dressers, footmen, the household comptroller M. James, the duchess's maids, and numerous others followed. Because Forwood had not realized that the police escort would drive at a slow speed according to tradition, he had misjudged the length of time it would take to meet the train. He was already worried about the delay and the fact that the train might be missed when, to his horror, the duke announced, "We're going to have a lovely picnic!" Forwood dared not break rank to announce that this might mean missing the express. Following the royal command, every car stopped and a procession led by Wallis and the duke made its way into the fields. The duke told Forwood he wanted the dogs to be let off their leashes so that they could relieve themselves. Forwood said that if that were the case, they might be lost. The duchess agreed with Forwood.

The duke then ordered Forwood to take the

dogs on their leashes into a cornfield and, in front of everyone, raise his leg repeatedly so that they would follow suit. By the time he had achieved his purpose, tables had been set up for what presumably would be a royal banquet. But when M. James opened the large picnic hampers, it was discovered that all they contained was peaches. Due to some error in the kitchens of the Château de Candé, the rest of the food had all been sent to the train in advance and only the fruit was passed through in the royal caravan. Everyone had to eat the peaches until several felt ill. It could have been a scene from Saint-Simon's journals of the Court of Louis XIV.

By the time this disagreeable feast was over, it became obvious even to the duke that the *Orient Express* might leave without the party. Everyone piled back into the cars, and the chauffeurs drove at reckless speed to the station. Fortunately, though much to the annoyance of the passengers, the express had been held. Then there was the laborious business of putting 266 pieces of royal luggage aboard; the duke insisted that 50 pieces be placed in his private car, leaving scarcely any room even to move. The car was ablaze from one end to the other with red and yellow roses.

The train's departure was still further delayed because one of the Cairn terriers escaped and had to be retrieved. The duchess in her hurry had left her hat in her car, and another automobile with numerous suitcases turned up late.

The *Orient Express* stopped in Venice on the way to Austria. After so many restrictions on their visits to Italy because of the Foreign Office's sensitivity, the Windsors were delighted to begin their honeymoon in Italy. The Foreign Office under Anthony Eden had, as we know, not allowed the duke to visit Italy before, since such a visit not only would expose the duke's Italian connections but would appear to give a too overt picture of support for Mussolini to the rest of the world. No doubt this, along with the romantic appeal of the Venetian canals, influenced the royal decision to stop off there. A tremendous mass of people greeted them at the station with the Fascist salute, to which the duke responded in kind. Forwood recalls that Mussolini had arranged an elaborate escort of gondolas to accompany the royal party to the Lido, where the group was housed at the Hotel Excelsior. The Windsors had a crowded three and a half hours in the city. It was clear that they were hugely popular

in Italy. Gondoliers took them in a brilliantly painted craft down the Grand Canal; they walked through St. Mark's Square, where they fed the pigeons; they saw St. Mark's Cathedral and the Ducal Palace. They took tea at the Excelsior. They boarded the train in the early evening, and as they waved farewell, a hundred carnations arrived from Mussolini in Rome. As they stood at the window of their private car, the duke once again gave the Fascist salute.

The train arrived at Arnoldstein in Austria at 11:45 on the night of the fourth. Dozens of young people dressed in traditional costumes arrived to bid the royal party welcome, but they were rudely turned away by the police. Instead, the Windsors were greeted by six journalists. They stepped off the train in a buoyant mood, accompanied by Dudley Forwood, Chief Inspector Storrier, and Inspector Attfield of Scotland Yard. Paul and Peggy Munster were absent, but the Countess Munster's Mercedes was there to meet them. The chauffeur drove them up a steep, dangerous road to the Castle Wasserleonburg, which dated back to the fifteenth century. The imposing forty-room gothic pile stood framed against the southern escarpments of a mountain. As the couple reached the huge gray-stone doorway, the duke

laughed, picked up Wallis, and carried her over the threshold to the hall, where thirty servants were waiting. The ancient housekeeper sagely remarked that the fact that the duke didn't stumble meant the couple would be very happy.

Like Villa Lou Viei, Wasserleonburg had a ghost. Anna Neumann had murdered, according to legend, six husbands; on each honeymoon, she had had a portrait painted of the new husband, and in days he had perished of poison. Achieving her last murder at the age of 82, the blushing bride was caught and executed, leaving a full confession. She was allegedly seen by many, including the Munsters, drifting, a semitransparent gray figure, through the castle's ancient halls.

Wallis immediately made changes in the castle. She stored the horns, tusks, and heads of various hippopotamuses, elephants, and deer in the attic, rearranged the heavy, ugly gothic furniture, and sent an army of newly hired maids to sweep and dust. However, she retained Anna Neumann's enormous sinister oil portrait which glared down from the north wall of the sitting rooms.

The couple seemed happy. The weather was perfect. There was a tremendous view across an

Austrian river valley to the snow-capped Julian Alps on the Italian-Yugoslav border, and there was a multiterraced garden with clumps of chrysanthemums and rhododendrons. The village of Noetsch nearby was blissfully free of photographers; it was almost empty because the menfolk were spread through the Alps searching for a savage wolf that had killed five children. World news seemed distant and insignificant in this beautiful spot. There were small ripples of information from the outside world during the days that followed: Ernest Simpson, in London, was pursuing a libel suit against a woman who had charged that he had been paid a substantial sum to yield to Wallis's divorce action. The case was subsequently settled out of court with an apology. The British and American newspapers reported Jardine's drawn-out struggle with the church in England. Otherwise, the couple had little to think about, and they slowly but surely grew bored. Wallis started to scold the duke for having abdicated and denied her the role of royal mistress. On June 8 the couple sent a telegram to Hitler, belatedly thanking him for his good wishes and gift on the occasion of their marriage. The following day they thanked Winston and Mrs. Churchill for a "lovely piece of plate"

sent as a wedding present. They also expressed their admiration for Randolph Churchill's article about the wedding in the London *Daily Express*. They posed happily for photographs; then they sent a note to George Allen asking him about Fort Belvedere. He reported that it would be left unoccupied for the indefinite future. Scene of the alleged leakage of the official documents, tainted by the presence of a woman who was utterly evil in the eyes of both court and church, it fell into a sad state of disrepair.

On June 20 the Windsors arrived in Vienna for a stay at the Hotel Bristol. Shortly afterward, Sam Gracie, honorary Brazilian minister in Vienna, and his British wife gave a dinner party for the Windsors at the Brazilian Legation. Among the guests was a young secretary of the Italian Embassy and George Messersmith. At dinner, Messersmith reported to Washington, Wallis was very bitter about the American press. The duke hung on her every word. It was then that an extraordinary episode took place. At coffee, the secretary of Chancellor von Schuschnigg arrived unexpectedly. He called Messersmith aside and gave him a sealed message stating that a train from Germany to Italy had been wrecked and that naval shells

had been found in it, sent by the Berlin admiralty for use by Mussolini's navy. This was top-secret information, of gravest concern to neutralist Austria and the United States, because it proved that Germany was directly supplying the Italian war machine. When Messersmith returned from his meeting with the chancellor's secretary to the party, the duke asked Messersmith why von Schuschnigg had sent somebody to see him. Foolishly, Messersmith breached the confidence and gave the duke the secret intelligence that had been conveyed to him. Soon afterward, Messersmith noticed that the duke was talking to the secretary of the Italian Embassy, who left immediately. The next day the military attaché of the U.S. Legation brought to Messersmith an intercepted and decoded telegram that the Italian ambassador, Prezziozi, had sent the night before to the Foreign Office in Rome; it said that, at the dinner, the duke had revealed the secret information of the train crash and that "the cat was out of the bag so far as the Naval shells were concerned." The duke had given away to the Italians the fact that the American government had obtained secret information about Nazi-Italian connections.

The Windsors continued in Vienna until the beginning of July. Both celebrated their birthdays in the city. Gifts poured in from all over the world. On June 25 word came from distant San Diego that Commander Earl Winfield Spencer had announced his engagement to a Miss Norma Reese Johnson.\* On June 30 a story appeared in the London *Evening Standard* in which Sir Gerald Wollaston, garter king of arms, stated that the duke "had hurried arrangements for his father's funeral." The duke was upset when he read the piece. Back at Wasserleonburg on July 1, he denied the charges to local reporters and told the newspaper's editor by telephone that Wollaston was the only person involved who wanted the funeral delayed. In New York the Reverend Jardine ran into trouble when he threatened to "blow the lid off" the abdication story by revealing that the duke was driven from England by "a political consortium." He claimed to have "inside information." Since he did not,

\* He had been involved in a horrible incident at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco in which a newlywed bride had left her husband for him and after a quarrel with him had flung herself from a window to her death.

and his remarks were irresponsible, many of his lecture engagements were canceled by their sponsors out of consideration for the British government.

Aunt Bessie arrived at the castle on July 22. The Windsors were accompanying her to Salzburg for the annual music festival when their chauffeur collided with a trolley car in the packed central city square; no one was injured. The following night all three attended Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*, under the direction of Arturo Toscanini. There was a dazzling society audience for the opera. Toscanini's conducting of the overture brought an ovation of an intensity which even that great maestro had seldom experienced. Lotte Lehmann was the star, overcoming the notorious flaws in her voice by the sheer force of her dramatic temperament. When the Windsors and Aunt Bessie fought their way through the crowd to the buffet at intermission, they were greeted by a burst of applause. The 83-year-old Mrs. Sarah Delano Roosevelt, mother of the president, was upstaged in the bar as more than 200 Americans gazed, transfixed, at Wallis, who looked magnificent in a white taffeta Schiaparelli gown illuminated with a thousand sequins.

On July 28 the Windsors returned to Venice

by train. Once more, the Italians greeted them ecstatically; they could hardly make their way down the Grand Canal as hundreds of gondolas swarmed about them. Hundreds more gathered at the Lido to catch a glimpse of them as they entered the Excelsior. Scores of photographs were taken when they sunbathed and swam the next day.

That same evening, Barbara Hutton and her fierce husband Count Haugwitz-Reventlow gave a party for the Windsors on the terrace of the Grand Hotel; among the guests were Wallis's old friends the theatrical producer Gilbert Miller and his wife Kitty Bache, the Maharaja and Maharani of Jaipur, and, interestingly enough, Count Ciano and his wife Edda Mussolini. Wallis was not told of the guest list in advance, and it is easy to imagine her feelings when she walked onto the terrace and saw her former lover, the father of her aborted child, rising to greet her. How she carried the evening off is not recorded; however, Barbara Hutton, who kept a diary entry on the occasion, noted that Wallis and the duke emphasized the virtues of fascism to their companions and that Wallis snapped at the duke constantly, instructing him on what to say and what to eat. Next day, Wallis and Barbara spent an esti-

mated \$25,000 between them shopping at the exclusive linen store Olga Asta's.

On the night of the thirtieth, they appeared at a performance of the Monte Carlo Ballet in *Romeo and Juliet*, and they danced for three hours after that at the Pergola nightclub. Their best friend in Venice was the Duke of Genoa, a cousin of King Victor Emmanuel. Once again, the duke frequently gave the Fascist salute to the delight of the Venetians and the consternation of Whitehall. He was, after all, still a member of the royal family, and whatever British foreign policy was regarding appeasement of Mussolini, this public indication of support for the Italian dictator was highly inadvisable.

By August 7 the Windsors were back at Wasserleonburg. Plans were advancing further for the trip to Nazi Germany. The key figure in the arrangements was still Fritz Wiedemann. A seeming Anglophile, Wiedemann held firm to the idea of peace with Great Britain for the indefinite future. He represented the group in Germany that was in support of a restoration of the powers of the German royal family. He believed, as much as the Duke of Windsor did, in recementing the royal family alliances that had been broken in World War I. As a political

moderate, he was not in tune with the extremist elements of the Nazis, but nonetheless, despite statements to the contrary, he was a devout servant of the *führer*. He had several strong connections in London. Among these was his mistress, the egregious, half-Jewish, Nazi agent Princess Stephanie Hohenlohe. Hitler had a surprising sexual interest in her despite her part-Jewish origin; he was prepared to overlook ethnic prejudice when employing certain loyal servants of the Third Reich. Later, he would give her the producer Max Reinhardt's castle as a present.

It was Wiedemann, under direct instructions of the *führer*, rather than Charles Bedaux, who was responsible for the Windsors' arrangements for their German trip in the fall. Dr. Robert Ley, Reich labor leader, was helping to sort out the details. It was agreed with the duke while he was in Austria that all payments for the trip would be made available from the special funds of the Hitler-controlled Reichsbank. Needless to say, the duke preferred it to be thought that he subsidized the trip himself.

On August 19, 1937, Charles Bedaux, who was in Budapest, called to see Howard K. Trav-

ers, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Legation. Bedaux announced that he was acting for the Duke of Windsor and said that the duke wished to study the lot of the lower classes and desired "to make a complete study of working conditions in various countries." This seemed harmless enough until Bedaux, somewhat indiscretely, added the dangerous words, "with a view to returning to England at a later date as the champion of the working classes." This was a deadly, dynamite-laden statement. What it implied was that the duke wished to upstage King George VI and reenter Great Britain, probably to seek political office. With the enthusiastic support of the peoples of Europe and the United States, he hoped to reassemble his vast following in Britain.

The statement that Bedaux made on his behalf had leaked back to London when Howard Travers reported it in a "strictly confidential" memorandum to the State Department on August 19. By that time, George Messersmith had returned to Washington as assistant secretary of state in charge of the Balkans, and when he received the document on September 10, there can be no question that he referred it to the appropriate British authorities. The result

would seriously affect the Windsors' entire future.

There was another reason for the duke's desire to visit Germany, which has been confirmed by Sir Dudley Forwood. He says:

Why did they go to Germany? I have very strong views on this. It was not to give a public statement of his approval for the Nazis. We went because he wanted his beloved wife to experience a State visit. And the only way such a State visit was possible was to make the arrangements with Hitler.

Sir Dudley does not explain why a visit to Mussolini would not have been equally possible, and perhaps slightly less dangerous.

Sir Dudley continues:

It must be admitted that, whereas the Duke, Duchess and I had no idea that the Germans were or would be committing mass murder of Jews, we were none of us averse to Hitler politically. We all felt that the Nazi regime was a more appropriate government than the Weimar Republic which had been extremely Socialist and under which, we felt, Germany might have

turned Socialist. Instead of *National* Socialist, which we felt was the lesser of two evils.

On September 2 Hardinge wrote to Vansittart clarifying the Windsors' status:

His Royal Highness the Duke of Windsor and the Duchess should not be treated by His Majesty's representatives as having any official status in the countries which they visit. For this reason it seems to the King that, except under special instructions, His Majesty's representatives should not have any hand in arranging official interviews for them, or countenance their participation in any official ceremonies.

He continued by stating that it was the king's wish that the duke and duchess not be invited to stay as guests in any embassy or legation. Ambassadors or ministers should not meet the couple at a station, and entertainment at the embassy would be strictly private and informal. The Duchess of Windsor must be placed on the right of His Majesty's representative on each occasion. "Anything of an official nature should be avoided."

The same day, Vansittart wrote to Sir Geof-

frey Knox, British ambassador to Hungary, stating:

H.R.H. the Duke of Windsor and the Duchess should be treated on the same lines as a member of the Royal Family on a holiday. If anything were contemplated which might give to the visit a more serious aspect, you should refer home at once. It is not considered that you should yourself meet them at the station, but that you should send a senior member of your staff. If they seem to wish to lunch or dine at the legation, there would be no harm in your inviting them, but you should avoid asking any politically prominent Hungarians to meet them.

The Windsors arrived in Hungary to stay with Bedaux at his Borsodivanka Castle on September 9. By now, both Washington and the Secret Intelligence Service were again keeping a very sharp eye on them. Messersmith hadn't forgotten the incident in Vienna when the duke had leaked the fact that Messersmith was informed about the arms shipments from Germany to Italy.

On September 14 Bedaux was back at the U.S. Legation in Budapest, saying that Travers

should inform the State Department that the duke would make a public announcement on October 3. In the statement he would disclose the fact that he and the duchess would visit Germany at Hitler's invitation for twelve days, beginning October 11, and that "the German government [had] placed two airplanes and eight automobiles at [their] disposal." The British ambassador at Berlin, Sir Eric Phipps, would be informed on the same day. The Windsors would leave for New York on the German steamer *Bremen* on November 11, and the duke "would appreciate being received by the President in order to discuss social welfare." In his memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State Wilson, Travers wrote, "[The duke] desires that his forthcoming visit [plans] be kept entirely secret, but will telegraph the British Ambassador in Washington at the same time he informs [the] British Ambassador in Berlin, October 3. The British government is not yet informed of the proposed visits, and he desires to keep them confidential until his October 3 announcement."

Meantime, despite Bedaux's great air of secrecy, the duke informed Sir Ronald Lindsay, British ambassador in Washington, who was on leave in England, that he would be going to

America; Lindsay, in a memorandum of that date to the Foreign Office in London, warned that there might be a subsequent attempt by the duke "to stage a semi-Fascist comeback in England by playing up to labor in America."

Sir Robert Vansittart summoned Lindsay to the Foreign Office to show him the secret file on the duchess's alleged espionage activities. What he saw there appalled him. Vansittart told him that instructions had been sent to every British minister and ambassador in the world forbidding them to accommodate the Windsors, give them dinners, or present them officially to anyone; at any railroad station, they were to be met by no one more important than a third secretary. The Windsors were to be given only "a bite of luncheon," a contemptuous final touch. That was how severe and damaging the contents of Vansittart's files had become.

The degree of Nazi (and more emphatically Italian) collaboration determined by Vansittart was extreme, going far beyond mere sympathy or approval. The Windsors traveled to Bucharest, Romania, on September 13. They were in Vienna on the fourteenth and then continued to Czechoslovakia where they contacted members of the Sports and Shooting Club of Aus-

tria, who were visiting there. On November 1 of the following year, Ribbentrop's *Dienststelle*, or Special Intelligence Service, reported that Windsor was president of the club. This cadre of wealthy socialites and members of minor royalty, some of whom were bisexuals, was considered dangerous and illegal, and it was under watch order by the gestapo and the Austrian police.

The report reads in full:

On German territory, in the neighborhood of Salzburg, is situated the Schloss Mittersill, which belongs to the company known as SIMAG, owned by the Princes of Lichtenstein. The aforementioned SIMAG has lent the castle to the Sports and Shooting Club, including its golf course and tennis courts.

The Duke of Windsor is honorary President of the club. From the membership roster, it is clear that a number of noted representatives of the royal families of Europe as well as foreign politicians are members. The club's exclusiveness may be judged by the fact that the membership fees are enormously high.

The club is now looking for German and other supporters. The local Police Chief and Salzburg Civil Authorities for State and Foreign

Policy as well as [the gestapo] for ideological reasons are interested in investigating the activities of the club. According to a report by a Professor Lehofrich of Vienna, a clean-up of the club's activities will be impossible without full German control. As an example, [one royal member] has recently fled Vienna because he was under threat of arrest on charges of homosexuality. In connection with this the [police] report also charges the Duke of Windsor with allegations of bisexuality.

That week of mid-September, Wallis and the duke were at Charles Bedaux's Borsodivanka Castle. On September 18 Cordell Hull, U.S. secretary of state, sent a memorandum to Budapest via consul Hugh Wilson saying that the President would be happy to receive the duke, but General Watson, the presidential secretary, added in handwriting the note "subject of course to consultation with the British Embassy at the appropriate time." He scratched out the words "who do not want this matter made public." Hull's memorandum continued, "It is difficult and even somewhat embarrassing to take a definite position until this government knows the relationship of the British Embassy toward the

proposed visit." By now, all cables in the matter were being sent in confidential code and marked "No Distribution." The matter was explosive: in view of the duke's popularity, the U.S. government did not want to seem to be insulting him, but at the same time the security files on the Windsors were so damaging that Washington was nervous of causing offense in Whitehall by arranging for him to be received. Matters were scarcely helped by the fact that the duke wanted to be accompanied on the whole tour by an executive of Eastman Kodak, which was in direct partnership with its equivalent German company. On September 14, 1937, Victor Mallet, British chargé d'affaires in Washington, referred to the Bedaux approach in Budapest in a memorandum to Eden:

The Duke has now ceased being front-page news over here, but if he were to come out this autumn we shall have all the old ballyhoo revived again. What is more, the tale of his sympathy for the South Wales miners and the consequent wrath of Mr. Baldwin, which is still widely believed in the middle west, will be revived by his proposed investigation of the life of the American working man. I can only hope

that nothing will come of this suggested trip, but I should be very grateful for any news which you may have about it.

On September 30, Oliver Harvey of the Foreign Office in London sent a lengthy memorandum to Vansittart about the tour of Germany. The memorandum revealed that the prime minister took the view that it would be impossible to stop the duke from making the visit, but that care should be taken to prevent representatives of the British government from taking any action which could be construed as countenancing the visit. In the same report Harvey revealed that it was known to the king that the German government had arranged the visit and that it was considered at the palace "most improper that the German Government should take upon itself to arrange such a visit without informing us." It was felt at the palace that no member of the British Embassy staff in Berlin should meet the royal train, "lest it might appear as giving a British official nature to the tour in Germany." Vansittart scribbled in the margin, "I quite agree. This is really a monstrous innovation—for propaganda purposes. . . . I agree with Sir Alexander Har-

dinge. We have not been consulted and should therefore stand aloof."

On October 1 Vansittart wrote a memorandum to Hardinge confirming that "nothing can be done to prevent [the visit] but that His Majesty's representatives should not take any action which could be regarded as countenancing it." He added: "Personally I think these tours, prearranged without a word to us, are a bit too much. And I hope our missions abroad will be instructed to have as little as possible to do with them. If we are to be expected to assist, we are entitled to be consulted, and to have a chance at dissuasion. The direct approach to our missions, without our knowledge, is hardly fair." In a response of the following day, Hardinge wrote in a postscript, "I entirely agree with what you say about these tours, and I feel strongly that nothing should be done to make them appear other than what they are. I.e., private stunts for political purposes—they can obviously bring no benefit to the workers themselves." The same day Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, British chargé d'affaires in Berlin, cabled in a mood of anxiety, saying:

If this visit comes off, I earnestly hope that your instructions will be to accord to the Duke of

Windsor courtesies not less than is the authorized practice at Vienna Legation. German Government are certain to make the maximum capital and publicity out of this visit, and it will be extremely embarrassing and painful for me if I am instructed to ignore His Royal Highness's presence, for this will not be understood here. . . . While I will of course scrupulously comply with the King's wishes, I trust that above will be taken into consideration.

On October 3 Ronald Lindsay wrote, from his house in Dorset, to Vansittart, saying among other things that "the intended visit of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to Washington fills me with unmitigated horror. . . . Of course the general lines of my conduct will be dictated to me by the Palace and the Prime Minister, and I shall do nothing till I receive from you the necessary indications of what is wished; but it will not have escaped your notice that there is a purely American side to this affair."

He added:

The visit will be a tremendous sensation—I think it certain that from the first moment [the Windsors] will be in the fullest glare of public-

ity and will be fairly mobbed wherever they go. The attitude of the Embassy will be a matter of the greatest public interest.

In my opinion it will be important to allow nothing to transpire indicating that *the visit to America in itself* is in any way disapproved, and I think therefore that I ought certainly to put the Duke and Duchess up at the Embassy while they are in Washington; and I think they should be presented at the White House and that I should at least give them a large Belshazzar [feast].

But I imagine that I should dissociate myself, tacitly, from the undeclared objects of the visit —that is from most of the Duke's activities in America outside Washington.

From the tenor of the memorandum, it is clear that the duke's extracurricular activities were again thought to be dangerously political.

With the Windsors now in Vienna after a brief trip to Paris, the discomfort of the U.S. government increased. Hugh Wilson, now in charge of the matter at the State Department, wrote a memorandum to Cordell Hull saying that there was clearly “a distinct political purpose” in the Windsor trip to Germany. The government was still “not taking sides” in what

was, "after all, a strictly British internal question."

On October 4 Vansittart wrote to Hardinge stating it would be preferable that the royal couple not be entertained at the British Embassy. Moreover, the ambassadorial staff should be instructed to refuse any invitations of a ceremonial character issued during the tour.

In a memorandum dated October 6 Hardinge made clear to Oliver Harvey of the Foreign Office that it was now known for certain that the German government was sponsoring the tour.

Hardinge cabled Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes in Berlin on October 6, categorically stating that the king forbade Forbes to attend the Windsors' arrival at the station in Berlin, that no member of the staff should accept any invitations connected with the tour, that Ogilvie-Forbes should have no hand in arranging any official engagements or interviews, that the Windsors were not to be entertained by any member of the embassy, nor should the staff accept invitations from the duke, and that consular officials should not meet the royal party on arrival anywhere. Above all, "The Embassy must scrupulously avoid in any way giving the appearance that His Majesty the King and His

Majesty's government countenance the proposed tour."

Forbes replied on October 7 in the following terms:

The instructions will be carefully carried out. Nevertheless I feel I should tell you they will leave an unfavorable impression of the attitude of the Embassy and of [His Majesty's government] which the Germans in all probability will view as another snub to a friendly gesture. They will closely watch the measure of recognition the Duke receives from H.M. missions in other foreign countries.

At last the arrangements for the visit to Germany were concluded. It was announced in the *New York Times* on October 9 that a conversation would take place between Adolf Hitler and "the English guest" which would be "an open discussion of those questions interesting the Duke." These questions would involve "the new Germany in its varied aspects, its hopes and aspirations and Hitler's hopes for the future." The Windsors would visit nine cities. The main purpose of their trip would be to study working conditions.

On October 9 Sir Ronald Lindsay was sum-

moned by the king to Balmoral for an extraordinary meeting on the matter of the Windsors. The queen was there, and among those present were two of the duke's worst enemies, Alan Lascelles and the recently knighted Sir Alexander Hardinge. Lindsay pointed out that if the Windsors were not accommodated at the British Embassy, it would be regarded by millions of Americans as a snub and an act of disapproval of the duke's interest in labor. The king, Hardinge, and Lascelles variously stated that the duke was behaving abominably: it was his duty not to embarrass the king; he was dropping bombshell after bombshell; and what would come next? Lindsay wrote to his wife two days later:

[In their view] he was trying to stage a comeback, and his friends and advisors were semi-Nazis. He was not straight—he hadn't let the King have an inkling of his plans, and the first news of them was a letter from him to the King's own agent. . . . What if he were to go to a Dominion? Or to cross over from the United States into Canada? There was a lot of talk about a scheme by which I should invite him to stay at the Embassy, and then a swift emissary should speed over and persuade him to

decline. This absolutely horrified me and it was, thank God, discarded because [they realized] "that woman" would never allow him to decline, and because there exists no emissary who would command confidence and at the same time stand the smallest chance of influencing the Duke.

The queen joined in the conversation. She expressed grief rather than indignation as she mentioned the duke. "He's so changed now," she said, "and he used to be so kind to us." She had no good words to say about Wallis. It was clear that the royal family was uniform in its resolve that the Windsors would receive absolutely no privileges on their American visit. The king and queen would not even allow them to be accompanied by Lindsay when they went to the White House. Lindsay wrote to his wife on October 17, "[The duke] is being turned into a purely Nazi show, and of course he is known here to have decided Nazi tendencies." Later, Lindsay managed to arrange through the Secret Intelligence Service to have two letters that were written by Bedaux intercepted and smuggled to the embassy. The letters were to private contacts in the United States and indicated that the duke planned to

be the leader of an international peace movement, which was considerably more sinister than it sounded.

The Windsors left Paris by train for Berlin, a crowd of 300 waving them good-bye. When the *Nord Express* chugged into the Friedrichstrasse Station in Berlin, hundreds more were waiting to greet them. The crowd screamed, "Heil Windsor!" interspersed with "Heil Edward!" as they stepped down from the platform to meet with Dr. Robert Ley, Fritz Wiedemann, the deputy political leader Artur Goerlitzer, and, amid a swarm of uniformed officials and a gestapo guard, a rather embarrassed third secretary of the British Embassy.

The Windsors checked into the Kaiserhof Hotel. Again, an immense crowd was waiting for them, chanting a specially composed song provided by the Propaganda Ministry. In defiance of the British Foreign Office, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, continuing chargé d'affaires in the absence of Sir Neville Henderson, the British ambassador who had sagely taken leave of absence, arrived at the Kaiserhof to pay his respects. He noted that the Windsors' suite directly overlooked Hitler's Chancellery.

Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes explained to the duke that the king regarded the visit as purely

private and unofficial and laid down the rules vis-à-vis no entertaining, etc. Forbes cabled Harvey in London, "I shall . . . be very glad when the visit is over, as the absence of the Embassy from participation is marked and the subject of comment. The Ambassador is fortunate to be away."

Wallis stayed at the hotel resting while, shortly after noon, the duke visited the Stock Machine Works at Grünwald. Swastikas flew from the roof as the duke examined the ultra-modern buildings in which 3000 workers enjoyed an elaborate restaurant, an assembly and concert hall, a swimming pool, and handsomely planted lawns and flower beds. The duke asked several questions in German and obtained details of factory life from workers whom Dr. Ley brought forward one by one. With loud laughs and hearty slaps on the back, Ley encouraged each man to tell the duke of the conditions of work, how disputes were resolved, and how labor and management conferred openly, unhampered by the spirit of class. Several men told the duke of their high wages, physical fitness classes each morning, and the nourishing food served in the restaurant. That afternoon the duke, along with 1000 workers, attended a concert of Wagner and Liszt given by the Ber-

lin Labor Front Orchestra; it featured the "Grail Aria" from *Lohengrin*, sung by Hitler's favorite American operatic tenor, F. Eyvind Laholm. At the end of the concert, "Deutschland Uber Alles" and the "Horst Wessel" were played, followed by "God Save the King." The duke returned at 4:30 p.m. and went shopping with Wallis.

That night Robert Ley gave an elaborate party at his thirty-seven-room house in the Grünwald. Among the guests were Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Goerlitzer, Himmler, and Hess. Goering could not be there because his brother-in-law had just been killed in the Bavarian Alps. The next day, while Wallis again stayed at the hotel, breaking her solitude only for a brief drive to Potsdam and back, the duke undertook a grueling inspection tour. An elaborate observation coach, described by Frederick T. Birchall of the *New York Times* as resembling somewhat "a streamlined duck," was used for the journey. It included nine seats, a bar, a small dining area, a wireless telephone, and a parlor car. Ley slowed its normal speed of 80 miles per hour to 40 along the *autobahns* so that the duke could get a good view of the countryside. At the Pomeranian border the coach halted to take aboard the local governor,

who joined the party headed by Ley on the journey to Crossensee, headquarters of the training school of the Death's Head Division of the Elite Squad of the SS. The Death's Head band greeted the party, playing the British national anthem, to which the duke responded with a detailed inspection as the men presented arms and he gave them a full Hitler salute. The sprawling barracks buildings, with their thatched roofs, were dominated by a vast tower with an ancient gateway. Here, the cream of Hitler youth studied and trained for four years, undergoing rigorous physical training for five hours a day. The duke's hosts explained to him that the main subjects of teaching were racial biology, German archaeology, history, and politics. After lunch he went on to the Stargard military airport. In Dr. Ley's twelve-passenger plane, he flew over the Baltic coast to see a 4-mile beach and luxury hotel which was being built to accommodate members of the Nazi youth movement. He returned to Berlin at 6 p.m.

That evening the Aga Khan, having just presided over the League of Nations Assembly, dropped by the hotel after dinner. His sympathies were in accord with the Windsors'. Three years later, on July 25, 1940, German Foreign

Office documents would reveal that he planned to join Hitler at Windsor Castle and that he recommended renewed bombing of England a few days before more bombing took place. The next day, October 14, heavy rain prevented the duke from flying to Brunswick; instead, he and Wallis visited the Berlin War Museum and the Pergamon Museum; later, the duke went to a Turkish bath. That afternoon the couple visited with the Goerings for tea at the air minister's famous hunting lodge, Karinhall. They saw the plump field marshal's electric train and chatted away happily; Frau Goering never forgot the encounter, writing of it warmly in her memoirs many years later.

Forwood remembers:

We had a meal at Karinhall, at which Goering and the Duke and Duchess sat at a high table on a raised dais while the rest of us sat below. Behind Goering's desk there was a large map in marquetry. Except for England, the map was completely covered in colors indicating that it was in the possession of Germany. My master looked at Goering and said, "Isn't this a little impertinent? A little premature?" Goering replied, "It is fated. It must be." I remember the Field Marshal saying, "My wife is pregnant. If

it's a son, a thousand planes will fly overhead. If it's a daughter, only five hundred." There was one vulgar touch I remember. There were paintings of nude women over his bed.

That evening, the Windsors had a very interesting visitor: Ernst Wilhelm Bohle.\* Yet another visitor in that crowded twenty-four hours was Dr. Goebbels. He had, of course, been host for the Oswald Mosleys when they were married the previous year in his house. Goebbels always regretted the fact that Windsor had left the throne. During World War II Goebbels wrote in his diary that he regarded as a tragedy the failure of Germany to make an arrangement with the duke toward permanent

\* Born in Bradford, England, Bohle was raised in South Africa and had renounced his British citizenship just before the Windsors arrived. Intelligent, forceful, and domineering, he had joined the Nazi party in 1932. In 1933 he became head of the Auslands Organisation, known familiarly as the AO. It was the organization of Germans abroad. In November 1933 he was elected to the Reichstag. He was bent upon securing a permanent alliance of all international peoples of German descent against the Soviet Union. Later, he would be secretly instrumental in the flight of Rudolph Hess to Scotland, and he undertook the translations of Hess's letters to the Duke of Hamilton concerning a negotiated peace. Historians have always thought that Hess undertook the mission without help from the government.

alliance. He regarded his meeting with the duke as one of "the great impressions of my life." The Duke of Windsor struck him as "a far-sighted, clever and yet modern man." He recognized the supreme importance of the social problem in Germany. Goebbels continued, "He was too clever, too progressive, too appreciative of the problem of the underprivileged, and too pro-German" (to have remained on the throne). Goebbels concluded, "This tragic figure could have saved Europe from her doom. But instead, as Governor of the Bahamas, he had to witness the disintegration of the British Empire and perhaps of Europe and the West altogether." On the fifteenth, the Windsors went to Essen by train to visit a large coal mine (the duke went down 1500 feet into the bowels of the earth, with Dudley Forwood, negotiating a series of awkward steel ladders, with water splashing on his head, to the base of the shaft) and then went on to Krupp's Armaments Factory, the leading German armament manufacturers.

A reception was given by the president of the Rhine province that night in honor of the distinguished guests. On the sixteenth, the Windsors were in Düsseldorf, where they attended a so-called creative folk exposition. Sur-

rounded by yelling, laughing, and frantically gesturing people, the duke, flanked by a flying squad of SS men, responded in kind to a chorus of "Heils." The duke was impressed and deeply fascinated, but the duchess was bored, as the guide, Dr. Maiwald, whom the duke had met during the Paris Exposition, explained the exhibits of every aspect of German industry. They saw examples of artificial textiles being made, buna rubber, and displays of the uses of coal, sand, stone, and wood. Dr. Maiwald said for years afterward that no other person he had ever entertained knew as much about the technical details of industry as the duke, who yet again gave the Nazi salute as he journeyed through the crowded streets.\* There was an incident in which an Englishwoman had to be arrested because she was screaming out threats. The Windsors went on to see a miners' hospital, where they talked with injured men; then the duke went alone to see the Krupp colony for workers, unexpectedly dropping in on some old-age pensioners. The Windsors returned to their hotel, going over the details of their American trip. They were still completely ig-

\* The newsreels were tampered with in England to remove his "heiling" arm.

nored by the local British consular representatives.

They visited a concentration camp which appeared to be quite deserted. Forwood says, "We saw this enormous concrete building which of course I now know contained inmates. The Duke asked, 'What is that?' Our host replied, 'It is where they store the cold meat.' In a horrible sense, that was true."

On October 17 the Windsors were in Leipzig. Once more, a crowd of several thousand greeted them at the station with the Hitler salute, and this time there were forty swastika banners waved overhead. Ironically, the best hotel in Leipzig was closed because it had a Jewish owner, and they had to take second best in an unsatisfactory hotel. As thousands more stood in the street below their windows, the duke thanked them in German for their kindness, saluted them, and then said good-night. That same evening he made it clear to Ley that he would not be prepared to meet Herr Julius Streicher, the Nuremberg party chief; the reason can be deduced from an article that appeared several months earlier in Streicher's newspaper *Sturmer*, accusing the duchess of being Jewish.

On that same day Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes

wrote to Eden, who handed the letter to Hardinge and Sir Ronald Lindsay, discussing a meeting Forbes had just had on the fifteenth with Prentiss Gilbert, new counselor and chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy. He reported that Gilbert had discussed with him the matter of the Windsor visit to the United States and had mentioned that Bedaux had approached him to get U.S. government approval of the visit and treatment in America of the duchess as royalty. Gilbert told Ogilvie-Forbes that he did not encourage these proposals. Bedaux had made it plain to Gilbert that he would be paying the Windsors' expenses for the American tour; Bedaux also revealed the illuminating fact that following the official visit to the United States the duke would make a similar one to Italy and Sweden. In Sweden he would be put in touch, by Bedaux, with Axel Wenner-Gren, the multimillionaire Swedish Nazi collaborator and inventor of the vacuum cleaner. The report added:

[The Swedish millionaire] . . . was interested in world peace through labor reconciliation. Bedaux said it was also intended that H.R.H. should take up this line and even went so far as to express the opinion that H.R.H. might in

due course be the "savior" of the monarchy! Bedaux also tried behind Gilbert's back to get Miss Frances Perkins, the American Secretary of Labor, to send an invitation direct to H.R.H., an attempt which has been foiled.

. . . Much of the above will, I fear, be painful reading, but I feel you ought to know what has been going on here and that it would be as well to keep an eye on Mr. Bedaux's activities.

On the twentieth, the Windsors' old friend and cousin Charles, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, gave an elaborate dinner party for the Windsors and a hundred guests at the Grand Hotel in Nuremberg. The guests included many of the aristocrats with whom the duke had hobnobbed during his father's funeral and jubilee. Coburg told the Windsors at the dinner that he totally accepted Wallis's right to be "Her Royal Highness." His wife and all the other women guests curtseyed to her deeply. Even her place card carried the German equivalent of H.R.H.

The Windsors visited what the *New York Times* called "the altars and temples of the National Socialist Cult." The couple continued to Stuttgart. An awkward incident took place there. While returning from a factory visit, the

duke, who had left Wallis at the hotel, on an impulse decided he wanted to see the palace of the kings of Württemberg. Dr. Ley looked embarrassed, but the duke insisted. When he entered, he was interested to see a huge illuminated map of the world in lights, showing those portions which represented the German colonies "improperly" seized from the Reich after World War II. He grimaced with displeasure when he noted that certain of these were now British possessions. He also saw a display of photographs of Nazi storm troops marching through Chicago and New Jersey. He was shown more maps, marked in red to indicate how many Germans lived in certain countries. That night the duke and duchess went to the great municipal auditorium to attend a "Strength through Joy" festival. They saw a pageant and play illustrating the glories of German youth; their arrival and departure were marked by frantic shouting, applause, and Nazi salutes.

And now at last came the climax of the trip: the meeting with Adolf Hitler on October 22, which came just twenty-five days after Hitler had entered Berlin with Mussolini, joining him in an exchange of toasts at an official banquet. That encounter had sealed the doom of all the

early dreams of the Duke of Windsor that by his appeasing the Italian dictator, Mussolini and the *führer* would be kept firmly apart. Three days before the ducal visit, Lord Halifax had visited Hitler, hoping to sustain the British balance of power in western Europe by at least seeming to encourage Hitler's now unbridled ambitions. In the course of the conversation Halifax had stated that the new prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, wanted to make a permanent settlement with Germany and encourage talks on the cabinet level between London and Berlin; Britain would concede to Hitler certain colonies in Africa and would give him a free hand in eastern Europe. Nothing much came of this conversation. As it happened, Hitler had already decided in secrecy on a policy of obtaining "living space" by going to war. He would strike west as well as east; but it was part of his policy to pretend to representatives of the British Empire that he wanted only peace with England. From the *führer*'s point of view, the timing of the duke's visit was extremely appropriate. He knew that the duke, obsessed with bolshevism as he was, would be very happy to encourage the *führer* in his desire to strike at Russia. Hitler was prepared to encourage any folly, even from an abdicated

monarch, that would allow him to carry off his supreme bluff in the matter of foreign policy.

Hitler's mistress, Eva Braun, eagerly awaited the arrival of the duke and duchess. Her biographer, Nerin E. Gun, wrote:

Eva begged Hitler to let her be introduced to the Duchess of Windsor. [She] had subjected her lover to endless eulogies of the ex-monarch who "had renounced an Empire for love of a woman. . . . . According to some, she hinted that Mrs. Simpson [sic] had something in common with Eva Braun, and that a sincere lover could accept a small sacrifice—not the loss of a crown like Edward, but the risk of a slight blow to his prestige, by marrying the woman that he declared he loved. Hitler pretended not to understand and in order not to aggravate the situation, claimed that the demands of protocol prohibited the meeting.

Hitler looked forward to the meeting. There is no question that in the *führer's* grand design for the future, Lloyd George, who had visited with him the previous year and who was his favorite British politician, would become head of the puppet English government under his control, with the royal family exiled to Canada

and the duke restored to the throne with Wallis as queen. Paul Schwarz recalled he still constantly ran the films of various yacht voyages and of the duke conferring with Wallis at the time of his father's funeral. He never ceased raving to Ribbentrop about Wallis's lack of makeup, "not bad figure and impeccable grooming and couture."

At 1:10 p.m. the train arrived at the foot of the mountain at Obersalzburg, where, in the company of Robert Ley and Dr. Paul Schmidt, special interpreter for the Foreign Office, they took a trip to Lake Königssee. At 2:30 p.m. the couple was driven up the mountainside in the company of Dudley Forwood; they were followed to the hunting lodge by three carloads of detectives and SS men. The roads had been completely cleared of tourists; under normal conditions thousands would be seen on the steep incline, making their way up the mountainside to see Hitler's lair. Now, only twenty, who had special influence, stood waiting on special permit at the gates as the procession of cars swept through.

Surrounded by officials, Hitler stood waiting for the Windsors at the bottom of a flight of steps, wearing the brown jacket of a Nazi party

official, black trousers, and patent-leather shoes. He conducted the Windsors into the entrance hall. It was dominated by a painting of Bismarck, grandfather of the Windsors' close friend Prince Otto. As the duke and duchess walked along the passageway behind their famous host, a series of tall, fair-haired, muscular guards, dressed in brass-buttoned uniforms, stood at attention. The Windsors were taken to an anteroom where servants removed their coats. They walked down three marble steps into an enormous reception hall. One wall of the room was filled entirely with a bay window which overlooked the Unsterberg mountain. Hitler pointed to the view, a sweeping display of peaks and sloping green meadows where workers toiled with hoes.

As the *führer* ordered afternoon tea, the couple had the opportunity to observe the details of the room. The walls were white, relieved by paneling of fumed oak. There was an enormous marble fireplace with great heaps of cordwood on either side. There were tapestries of figures of the period of Frederick the Great mounted on immense, powerful white horses. The carpet was cherry red, the marble in the room a matching red. The furniture covers were

stitched in a series of swastika motifs and Nazi mottoes. There was a grand piano with a bust on it of Richard Wagner, and a large globe of the world. Everywhere there were white and yellow flowers: hydrangeas, zinnias, pansies, roses, carnations. Hitler's special adviser Walter Hewel, his official interpreter Paul Schmidt, and his photographer Heinrich Hoffman, were present.

For all except twenty minutes of the two-hour visit, Hitler was with both the Windsors. While tea was being prepared, he showed his guests the entire house and gardens. He pointed out Salzburg from one of the balconies. Albion Ross of the *New York Times* was one of the few reporters permitted to enter the building and receive information as to what was going on. He described the intense interest that the *führer* had in both of his guests.

Successive biographers and historians have claimed that aside from some generalized remarks recorded by Paul Schmidt, no word of the conversation between Hitler and his visitors survives. This is incorrect.

There is even a living eyewitness. Sir Dudley Forwood was present at the encounter. He says:

I vividly recall how the conversation began. My master said to Hitler, "The Germans and the British races are one. They should *always* be one. They are of Hun origin." I fear that His Royal Highness had overlooked the Norman Conquest!

The Duke was very annoyed because Schmidt had been hired. The Duke spoke, as we know, flawless high German. He said to Hitler, in German, "I do not require this man." Hitler did not respond correctly, but said to the translator in German that the conversation would be continued as scheduled, and that he expected the Duke to speak English. The unfortunate Schmidt had to convey this statement in English to my master. And so it went on. Every few minutes, the Duke would say, irritably, to Schmidt, "That is not what I said to the *führer*." Or he would say, "That is not what the *führer* said to me." They also discussed comparative conditions of the Welsh and German miners. Hitler was most attentive.

On November 4 William Bullitt, U.S. ambassador to France, would write to President Roosevelt giving an account of the duchess's description of her discussion with Hitler. Hitler told her that the Nazi buildings would one day "make more magnificent ruins than [those of]

the Greeks." It seems clear that most of the Führer's conversation with the Windsors was deliberately generalized, socially welcoming, and inconsequential. However, he drew the duke into another room for a twenty-minute talk that was of much greater moment. The duke himself in an article published in the *New York Daily News* on December 13, 1966, described what was said:

My ostensible [sic] reason for going to Germany was to see for myself what national Socialism was doing in housing and welfare for the workers, and I tried to keep my conversation with the Führer to these subjects, not wishing to be drawn into a discussion of politics. Hitler, for his part, talked a lot, but I realized that he was only showing the tip of the German iceberg. In a roundabout way, he encouraged me to infer that Red Russia was the only enemy, and that it was in Britain's interest and in Europe's too, that Germany be encouraged to strike east and smash Communism forever. Hitler was then at the zenith of his power. His eyes were piercing and magnetic. I confess frankly that he took me in. I believed him when he implied that he sought no war with England . . . I thought that the rest of us could be

fence-sitters while the Nazis and the Reds slogged it out.

It is thus clear that the duke encouraged Hitler in his ambition to strike against Russia. The duke had other suggestions to make. In his table talk on May 13, 1942, according to records obtained by the historian David Irving, Hitler said, "The King [sic] offered to meet Germany's colonial needs by allowing Germans to settle northern Australia, thereby creating a powerful shield for British interests against Japan." That is a very curious statement. One can see from other documentation that Britain was afraid of a Soviet-Japanese alliance, and in 1939 a group of British businessmen acting as secret agents would be arrested in Tokyo, tried, and imprisoned for spying on Japanese officials in regard to this matter. According to Irving, the duke went on to tell Hitler that his brother George VI was "weak and vacillating and wholly in the grip of his evil and anti-German advisors." This was of course a reference to Sir Alexander Hardinge and Sir Robert Vansittart. The duke also discussed his conversation with Hitler with J. Paul Getty, a close friend of his who also had Nazi connections. In his mem-

oirs, Getty remembered asking the duke, "Did Hitler listen to you when you spoke with him?" The duke replied, "Yes, I think so. The way was opened—ever so slightly—for further progress. Had there been any proper follow-through action in London or Paris, millions of lives might have been saved." He meant that he proposed permanent peace with Germany and (Getty said) mass emigration of Jews from Germany, also advocated by Charles Bedaux and Sir Oswald Mosley, rather than slaughter.

Getty added the following revealing paragraph:

Although [the duke] never said as much to me, I had reason to suspect that he was not acting on his own when he went to Germany and spoke to Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It would not surprise me if one day a musty EYES ONLY file is fished out of some top security vault and new light is thrown on the episode.

In part because of his friendships and personal contacts, the duke, and Wallis with him, apparently did not approve of Hitler's genocidal methods or mass imprisonment of Jews, despite the somewhat generalized anti-Semitism,

typical of the time, which the Windsors had a tendency to express. The highly charged meeting with the *führer*, due to be dismissed as insignificant by enemies of the duke and partisans alike, ended with a warm parting. The *New York Times* noted:

Members of the entourage of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor reported after their visit . . . that the Duchess was visibly impressed with the *Führer's* personality, and he apparently indicated that they had become fast friends by giving her an affectionate farewell. He took both her hands in his saying a long goodbye, after which he stiffened to a rigid Nazi salute that the Duke returned.

After that, Hitler turned to Schmidt and said, "She would have made a good queen."

That night the Windsors dined with Rudolf Hess and his wife in Munich; Frau Hess wrote to friends in Alexandria, Egypt, saying how warmly impressed she was, especially with the duchess. She has recalled recently that she was nervous about meeting Wallis because she felt dowdy; but once they met she relaxed and enjoyed Wallis's company. Ernst Wilhelm Bohle

turned up to act as the interpreter, cementing his friendship with the Windsors. Hess shared the Windsors' preference for mass Jewish emigration rather than wholesale slaughter. After leaving Munich, Dr. Ley returned to Berlin, and two Labor Front officials drove the Windsors to the Austrian border. It is said that as they arrived, the duchess gave a bag of money to an SS official with the words, "This is for the Strength Through Joy Fund."

After giving a dinner party for Dr. Ley's assistant, Stabsleiter Simon, and four other officials who had escorted the party around, the couple returned to Paris on the twenty-third.

That same day Vansittart wrote to Hardinge, referring to the letter from Ogilvie-Forbes sent on the seventeenth. In a postscript Vansittart said:

I see . . . in this disturbing letter a reference to visits to Italy and Sweden. You will remember that I prophesied the former, and that was why in my conversations with [Sir Ronald] Lindsay I was very anxious to set no precedents in the United States which would be embarrassing when the inevitable visit to Italy was brought forward.

On October 24 Bedaux wrote from the Château de Candé, sending Sir Ronald Lindsay, at the Traveler's Club in Pall Mall, London, the first draft of the Duke of Windsor's schedule of visits. It was to start in Washington on Armistice Day and finish in Los Angeles and San Francisco in mid-December.

Exhausted, the Windsors rested for several days at the Hotel Meurice, the duke at last mustering enough strength for indifferent games of golf while Wallis, with a battery of secretaries, continued plans for the American trip. On the twenty-seventh, the duke appeared at the weekly luncheon of the Anglo-American Press Association in Paris, denying that his visit to Germany had any political significance, a statement which, of course, was totally false. Asked why he had chosen to sail to New York aboard the German ship *Bremen*, he pointed out that the only reason for the choice was that he had promised not to enter British waters, and the *Bremen* was the only ship that did not enter Portsmouth or Southampton after leaving Cherbourg. On the same day Charles Bedaux and his wife Fern sailed aboard the *Europa* for Manhattan; also on board was, by coincidence, Ernest Simpson, who was en route to marry Mary Kirk Raffray. His com-

pany was selling the *SS Leviathan* for scrap. On the twenty-eighth, Winston Churchill wrote to the Duke:

I have followed with great interest your German tour. I am told that when scenes of it were produced in the newsreels in the cinemas here, Your Royal Highness's pictures were always very loudly cheered. I was rather afraid beforehand that your tour in Germany would offend the great numbers of anti-Nazis in this country, many of whom are your friends and admirers; but I must admit that it does not seem to have had that effect, and I am glad it all passed off with so much distinction and success.

The Windsors continued to prepare for America. The Department of State in Washington sent out a blizzard of memorandums concerning the visit. Everybody in the government, especially the anti-Nazi secretary of the interior, Harold L. Ickes, was extremely uneasy about the matter. According to Charles Bedaux, Jr., Mrs. Roosevelt even contacted the labor leaders in Wallis's hometown of Baltimore, urging them to boycott the visit on the ground that the Charles Bedaux system of time-and-motion study in industry was unac-

ceptable and that anyone Bedaux sponsored would be unwelcome. On November 2 Sir Ronald Lindsay visited with Sumner Welles, under secretary of state, an opponent of Nazism, in Washington, to convey the details of the royal attitude toward the Windsors. He said, *inter alia*:

[The king and queen] felt that at this time when the new King [is] in a difficult situation and [is] trying to win the affection and confidence of his countrypeople, without possessing the popular appeal which the Duke of Windsor [possesses], it is singularly unfortunate that the Duke . . . [is] placing himself in a position where he would seem constantly to be courting the limelight. . . . [I have found] on the part of all the governing class in England a very vehement feeling of indignation against the course of the Duke of Windsor based in part on the resentment created by his relinquishment of his responsibilities, and in even greater part due to the apparent unfairness of his present attitude with regard to his brother, the King. . . . In court circles and in the Foreign Office and on the part of the heads of the political parties, this feeling [borders] upon [a] state of hysteria. . . . There has been a widening of this sentiment of indignation because of the

fact that the active supporters of the Duke of Windsor within England are those elements known to have inclinations towards Fascist dictatorships, and that the recent tour of Germany by the Duke of Windsor and his ostentatious reception by Hitler and his regime [can] only be construed as a willingness on the part of the Duke of Windsor to lend himself to these tendencies.

Lindsay, expressing his own opinion, said he didn't think the duke was aware of being exploited in this manner, an indication, like the rest of his statement, that he didn't fully understand the duke's actual purpose: to be a statesman without portfolio. However, he went on to say that the British government was anxious to avoid taking any action that would make Windsor a martyr; at the same time, he would not be permitted to present the duke to the President, clearly upon royal orders. In response, Welles said that no representative of the U.S. government would accompany the Windsors on the tour; the duke would be received by officials in each city and shown what he wanted to see, and that would be the end of the matter. Welles made it painfully clear that although the duke would be received infor-

mally at the White House, this would not be regarded as a state visit or anything approaching it and no special privileges would be accorded via George T. Summerlin, chief of the Protocol Division of the State Department, who would act as Washington host. The question of whether the duchess would be called "Her Royal Highness" arose. The duke made it clear he required that the title be used. Sir Ronald Lindsay particularly requested that it not be. The matter remained unresolved.

The tour would resemble the German excursion in terms of the emphasis on industry and working and housing conditions. It would begin in Newark, New Jersey, on November 11, and would then be followed by the visit to the White House and an NBC radio speech urging peace upon the world. There would follow a visit to several major corporations that had powerful German connections, including General Electric at Schenectady, Eastman-Kodak at Rochester, Standard Oil in Bayonne, and du Pont in Wilmington. The Windsors would then journey to Virginia to visit with Wallis's Montague cousins, to Washington again to see Aunt Bessie, and on to North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Detroit (General Motors), Dearborn

(Ford), Washington, Oregon, California, and then (secretly) Hawaii and Pearl Harbor.

On November 3, while the duke was working on his broadcast, recovering from a strenuous walk around a model housing project in the Paris slums as Wallis shopped extravagantly and had fittings with Mainbocher, and while Charles Bedaux gave a press conference in New York, the Baltimore Federation of Labor unanimously adopted a resolution to condemn the Windsors' visit, attacking Charles Bedaux as "the arch-enemy of organized labor." At a stormy meeting the Baltimore AFL leader, Joseph P. McCurdy, said, unnecessarily, "The Duchess, when she lived here, had no interest whatsoever in labor or the laboring classes of her fellow citizens." Even while he was delivering the speech, the British Broadcasting Corporation announced that it would not be relaying the NBC broadcast, even though the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation would be participating.

On November 4 Dr. William E. Dodd, Jr., son of the passionately anti-Nazi U.S. ambassador to Germany, said at a meeting of a citizens' committee in Philadelphia, and later on a local broadcast, that Windsor might "try to convince Americans of the achievements of Na-

tional Socialism in Germany." More labor organizations attacked the visit, taking their cue from Baltimore, as the Windsors attended an elaborate banquet at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, ironically with the anti-Nazi ex-premier, Leon Blum, and his wife among the guests. The Windsors were disturbed by the fact that Charles Bedaux suddenly crumbled in the face of opposition, offering to withdraw from his role as organizer of the tour. The duke declined this suggestion, but he and Wallis were given pause by a further statement of Bedaux: "Out of one hundred chances that [the Windsors] will come, about ninety are gone." He had just received word that the State Department, in answer to a request by Sir Ronald Lindsay, would not accord the duchess the title "Her Royal Highness."

Bedaux's statement, not conveyed to the Windsors in person, reached them most inconveniently and disagreeably by radio. They were very upset indeed. It is clear that if Bedaux had stood firm, they would probably still have continued with the trip, and indeed on November 5 their trunks were still packed.

In the afternoon Sir Ronald Lindsay telephoned the duke in Paris. Lindsay told the duke he had noticed with deepest distress the

trend of present opinion against the visit. The duke said he was considering dropping Bedaux and touring without him; Lindsay replied that he did not know how dependent the duke was on Bedaux's arrangements in regard to the tour. The duke revealed that U.S. Ambassador to France William Bullitt was urging him to go ahead, while Bedaux was urging him to desist. He thought he might perhaps curtail the tour, recasting it on the spot in Washington. Lindsay told him that would cause dreadful difficulties. Then, ever restless, the duke said perhaps he should just postpone the trip; if he did so, he asked, would he be able to make the tour later? Lindsay replied, "If you do, you will not be able to do it ever."

"Are you alarmed?" the duke said.

"Sir," Lindsay replied, "I feel the tour will cast a certain discredit on the American view of British monarchy."

An hour later the duke telephoned a number which he thought was that of William Bullitt and instead accidentally dialed the private number of Sir Eric Phipps. He began by saying that he was grateful for Bullitt's advice to go to the United States in spite of the campaign against him. Phipps urged the duke to ignore

Bullitt's recommendations, and the duke listened.

The following night the Windsors issued a press communiqué to the effect that they had decided to postpone their trip. In a desperate effort to overcome Nazi charges against them, they unwisely stated that they would be going to the Soviet Union. According to an Associated Press release, authorized by the duke, the purpose of the Russian visit would be "to balance the German tour" and "prove to the world that the Duke played no politics."

Later, Mrs. Roosevelt told Lady Lindsay a curious story. The ship that would have carried the Windsors was supposed to dock on November 11, Armistice Day. The Windsors would have arrived in Washington in time to allow them to go to Arlington and lay a wreath on the Unknown Soldiers' tomb. Mrs. Roosevelt, determined to prevent this, had arranged it so that the train would be delayed deliberately to prevent the wreath's being laid.







(continued from front flap)

bordellos, luxury hotels and gambling saloons of a China racked by civil war; the abrupt end of her only pregnancy; her friendships with top Nazi officials; the couple's involvement in the cover-up of a famous murder case, solved here for the first time; the reasons for the Queen Mother's vendetta against the Duchess; and the Duchess' shocking romantic life.

After World War II, the pair emerged as the dazzling monarchs of international society. The Duchess amassed an unprecedented \$50 million collection of jewels which were auctioned recently at Sotheby's to such celebrities as Elizabeth Taylor and Calvin Klein. Here is a jewel that everyone can afford: *The Duchess of Windsor* is sure to be an international sensation.

Photograph of flamingo  
brooch courtesy of Sotheby's

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Photograph of the Duchess of Windsor by Cecil Beaton